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# DUNGEON

A Dungeons & Dragons® Roleplaying Game Supplement

# Editorial:
# Two Hundred Issues!

*By Christopher Perkins*

*Illustration by William O'Connor*

What a fantastic week! Yesterday I celebrated my eleventh birthday, and this month, *Dungeon*® launches its 200th issue—a monumental achievement for any magazine. To celebrate, we've poured two issues' worth of words into one.

The magazine is, more or less, built the same way it has always been. A small group of behind-the-curtain folks review outside proposals and submissions, look for the perfect blend of adventures and articles, and then publish them. In the past, we called them editors. These days, they're called producers because their responsibilities and duties extend beyond editing and even beyond the magazines.

I'm the senior producer in charge of keeping everything related to D&D® on track and on budget. My producer team consists of Greg Bilsland and Stan! The three of us oversee both the magazines and our current crop of 4th Edition D&D roleplaying game products. We shepherd all this content from creation to publication, we correspond with freelancers, and we issue contracts.

When the producers are too busy to review an article or an adventure, we kick it over to our in-house designers—James Wyatt, Bruce Cordell, Matt Sernett, and Rodney Thompson—for feedback. We also have two developer/editors, Chris Sims and Tanis O'Connor, who tweak mechanics and stat blocks to make sure they follow the rules and make fun additions to the game.

Most of our copyediting work is handled by Miranda Horner and Ray Vallese, two freelancers whose history with the D&D game traces all the way back to TSR, and we have other fantastic freelance copyeditors as well. The last set of eyes on an article or adventure before it goes to typesetting belong to Kim Mohan, our managing editor. When Kim's swamped, either Jeremy Crawford or I step in to pick up the slack.

Our senior creative director, Jon Schindehette, oversees the visual look and feel of D&D, and our art director, Kate Irwin, works closely with freelance illustrators and the producers to create our final art and maps.

On the production side of things, we count on Angie Lokotz, our unflappable graphic production specialist, to make sure the magazines are typeset properly, and we have a mysterious entity named Garret Bright (whom I've never met even though we correspond frequently) who deploys the content on our website.

As you can see, a lot of people have a hand in putting *Dungeon* together, but for some of them *Dungeon* represents only a fraction of the work they do at Wizards . . . one of many projects. In any event, everyone's work would be for naught without our fantastic contributors and subscribers, to whom *Dungeon* #200 is dedicated.

This month we have adventures set in all three tiers of play, including the final installment of the

*Against the Giants* series. It's a whopper (my fault!), and it sets the stage for a series of drow-themed print products and in-store play experiences that carry us thematically through the rest of the year.

With this being the 200th issue, it also seemed fitting to bring *Dungeon*'s most iconic villain back from the dead. The red dragon Flame first appeared in "Into the Fire" (Issue #1) and reappeared in "Out of the Ashes" (Issue #17) and "Old Embers Never Die" (Issue #100). In "Flame's Last Flicker," you'll have a chance to fight Flame at different times in history, culminating in a final struggle against the dragon in his demilich form.

Don't be afraid to send us your comments and feedback on this month's adventures. Our producers are standing by! Now, I must be off—*Dungeon* #201 beckons. . . .

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# Dungeon Index (Issues #1–200)

*By Christopher Perkins and James Jacobs*

*This index compiles all of the adventures we've published over the past 200 issues. The adventures have been organized by edition, and then in ascending order of level, to make it easier for you to find the adventures that fit your party's needs. Adventures tied to specific campaign settings are listed separately. Gathered at the end of the adventure index is all of our non-adventure content, including articles, critical threats, maps of mystery, and Polyhedron mini-games.*

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# Adventures

*"The old tales are often among the best. A good author can take an old theme and breathe new life into it. That, in the final analysis, makes all the difference between acceptance and rejection, between good modules and clichés."*

—Roger E. Moore (Issue #2)

## AD&D 1st Edition

| Level | Adventure | Author(s) | Issue |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Lady of the Lake | Laura Ferguson | 5 |
| 1 | Trouble at Grog's | Grant and David Boucher | 4 |
| 1+ | Secrets of the Towers | Larry Church | 10 |
| 1-3 | Assault on Eddistone Point | Patricia Nead Elrod | 1 |
| 1-3 | Falcon's Peak | David Howery | 3 |
| 1-3 | Grakhirt's Lair | John Nephew | 1 |
| 1-3 | Lurkers in the Library | Patricia Nead Elrod | 9 |
| 1-3 | Matchmakers, The | Patricia Nead Elrod | 7 |
| 1-3 | Monsterquest | Vince Garcia | 10 |
| 1-3 | Mountain Sanctuary | John Nephew | 8 |
| 1-3 | Nightshade | Nigel D. Findley | 7 |
| 1-3 | Stolen Power, The | Robert Kelk | 5 |
| 1-4 | Huddle Farm | Willie Walsh | 12 |
| 1-4 | Roarwater Caves | Willie Walsh | 15 |
| 2-4 | Caermor | Nigel D. Findley | 2 |
| 2-4 | Escape from the Tower of Midnight | Paul Kane | 4 |
| 2-4 | Light of Lost Souls | Nigel D. Findley | 12 |
| 2-4 | Moor-Tomb Map, The | Jon Bailey | 13 |
| 2-4 | Necropolis | Nigel D. Findley | 16 |
| 2-5 | Masqueraider | Randy Maxwell | 14 |
| 3-5 | Crypt of Istaris, The | Richard Fichera | 9 |
| 3-5 | Fluffy Goes to Heck | Rick Reid | 4 |
| 3-5 | Guardians of the Tomb | Carl Smith | 1 |
| 3-5 | In the Dwarven King's Court | Willie Walsh | 2 |
| 3-5 | Pit, The | Randal S. Doering | 17 |
| 3-5 | Wards of Witching Ways | Christopher Perkins | 11 |
| 3-6 | Dwarves of Warka, The | Fran Hart | 16 |
| 3-6 | Shrine of Ilsidahur, The | John Nephew | 10 |
| 3-7 | Blood on the Snow | Thomas M. Kane | 3 |
| 4-6 | Chasm Bridge, The | Desmond R. Varady | * |

* Published in *Dragon* #131.

# Dungeon Asides

*By Christopher Perkins*

Did you know that Wizards of the Coast was named after a D&D campaign? I didn't know that 'til I read it in *Dungeon* magazine. Here are some highlights from the past 200 issues of *Dungeon* magazine, for those of you who might be missing a few issues in your collection!

**"Trouble at Grog's" (Issue #4)**
**Written by Grant & David Boucher**

"Trouble at Grog's" presented something no one ever expected to see: a sympathetic half-ogre. All Grog wanted to do was settle down as proprietor of the Happy Half-Ogre Inn and Tavern. Little did he know his success would rub the competition the wrong way, leading to some "inn-fighting" with the owner of the rival Dagger Rock Tavern, Yuri Kineron.

**"The Jingling Mordo Circus" (Issue #7)**
**Written by Vic Broquard**

Sometimes an adventure comes along that tackles a particular idea or theme so well that it pretty much closes the door on other submissions of its kind. Such is the case with "The Jingling Mordo Circus." Owner and ringleader Max Mordo, an evil wizard, uses the circus as a front for his kidnapping schemes and his magic to turn his victims into sideshow monsters. It's the first and only circus *Dungeon* has published.

| Level | Adventure | Author(s) | Issue |
|---|---|---|---|
| 4-6 | Glass House, The | Wolfgang Baur | 15 |
| 4-6 | Stranded on the Baron's Island | Willie Walsh | 14 |
| 4-6 | Vesicant | Randal S. Doering | 16 |
| 4-7 | Dark Tower of Cabilar | Michael Ashton & Lee Sperry | 1 |
| 4-7 | Deadly Sea, The | Carol and Robert Pasnak | 3 |
| 4-7 | For a Lady's Honor | Estes Hammons | 8 |
| 4-7 | Forbidden Mountain | Larry Church | 6 |
| 4-7 | Hirward's Task | Rich Stump | 5 |
| 4-7 | Hunt in Great Allindel, The | Richard W. Emerich | 17 |
| 4-7 | Intrigue in the Depths | Michael Lach & Rocco Pisto | 12 |
| 4-7 | White Death | Randy Maxwell | 6 |
| 4-8 | Wounded Worm, The | Thomas M. Kane | 8 |
| 4-8 | Wreck of the Shining Star, The | Richard W. Emerich | 15 |
| 5-7 | Elephants' Graveyard, The | David Howery | 15 |
| 5-7 | Phantasm Chasm | Erik Kjerland | 14 |
| 5-7 | They Also Serve . . . | Robert Kelk | 10 |
| 5-7 | Treasure Vault of Kasil, The | Patrick G. Goshtigian & Nick Kopsinis | 13 |
| 5-8 | Black Heart of Ulom, The | Mark Keavney | 11 |
| 5-8 | Ruins of Nol-Daer, The | H. L. McClesky | 13 |
| 5-8 | Wooden Mouse, The | Roger Smith | 11 |
| 5-9 | Titan's Dream, The | William Todorsky | 2 |
| 6-8 | Master of Puppets | Carl Sargent | 14 |
| 6-9 | Kingdom in the Swamp | John Nephew | 4 |
| 6-10 | Into the Fire | Grant and David Boucher | 1 |
| 7-9 | Rotting Willow, The | Edward P. Bromley III | 5 |
| 7-10 | In Defense of the Law | Carl Sargent | 8 |
| 7-10 | Palace in the Sky | Martin & John Szinger | 16 |
| 8-10 | After the Storm | Nick Kopsinis & Patrick G. Goshtigian | 6 |
| 8-12 | Book with No End, The | Richard W. Emerich | 3 |
| 8-12 | Bristanam's Cairn | John Nephew | 6 |
| 8-12 | Dark Conventicle, The | Richard W. Emerich | 11 |
| 8-12 | Out of the Ashes | Grant Boucher | 17 |
| 8-12 | Plight of Cirria, The | Grant and David Boucher | 9 |
| 8-12 | Question of Balance, A | Nigel D. Findley | 14 |
| 10+ | Eyes of Evil, The | Tom Hickerson | 5 |
| 10+ | Jingling Mordo Circus, The | Vic Broquard | 7 |
| 12 | Scepter of the Underworld | James Jacobs | 12 |
| 14-18 | Threshold of Evil | Scott Bennie | 10 |
| Any | Going Once . . . Going Twice | Patricia Nead Elrod | 13 |

**Common Ground: Evil Wizards in Cloud Castles**

What's the deal with wizards, anyway? They're all a bunch of power-hungry louts! In "The Plight of Cirria" by Grant & David Boucher (Issue #9), a cloud dragon asks the adventurers to rescue her mate from Ezoran, an evil archmage who needs the dragon's knowledge to seize control of a cloud giant's castle. In "Palace in the Sky" by Martin & John Szinger (Issue #16), the heroes storm the castle of a family of cloud giants under the influence of the evil wizard Sazor Stratos. The adventure features one of the coolest castles ever published; have fun stormin' it.

**Common Ground: Monsters as Heroes**

In "Monsterquest" by Vince Garcia (Issue #10), you get to play monsters on a quest for an orc chieftain, and one of the NPCs you meet along the way is a half-elf ranger named Roger of the Moor (!). Will you befriend or attack him? The theme of monstrous adventurers resurfaces again in "Rank Amateurs" by John Terra (Issue #22), in which a ragtag party of monsters must successfully deliver a declaration of war for an ogre chieftain named Mmm-Buh! The adventure also features, among other things, a troublesome wererat named Will Erd (!!).

**"The Ruins of Nol-Daer" (Issue #13)**
**Written by H. L. McClesky**

This adventure delivers a ruined, monster-infested castle crawl not unlike I6 *Ravenloft*, the classic AD&D adventure, only instead of being tormented by a vampire, the adventurers find themselves hounded by a half-demon cambion. But the biggest surprise lurks deep in the dungeons below the castle: a fantastic hoard guarded by two black dragons!

# AD&D 2nd Edition

| Level | Adventure | Author(s) | Issue |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0-1 | Below Vulture Point | Jeff Fairbourn | 39 |
| 1 | Ashtar's Temple | DeAnna Ferguson | 81 |
| 1 | Bad Batch of Brownies, A | Lisa Smedman | 58 |
| 1 | Best Laid Plans, The | Kent Ertman | 79 |
| 1 | Carcass Fracas! | Stephen J. Smith | 57 |
| 1 | Clarshh's Sepulcher | Willie Walsh | 53 |
| 1 | Handle with Care | Ron Poirier | * |
| 1 | Legacy of the Liosalfar | Chris Hind | 42 |
| 1 | Murder of Maury Miller, The | Cameron Widen | 57 |
| 1 | Scar, The | Ray Winninger | 80 |
| 1 | Visiting Tylwyth | Scott Walley | 77 |
| 1 | When the Light Goes Out | Steve Loken | 47 |
| 1-2 | Alicorn | David Howery | 33 |
| 1-2 | Back to the Beach | Willie Walsh | 50 |
| 1-2 | Euphoria Horrors | Alan Grimes | 34 |
| 1-2 | Faerie Wood | Jeff Crook | 73 |
| 1-2 | Fraggart's Contraption | Willie Walsh | 47 |
| 1-2 | Hair Today, Gone Tomorrow | J. Bradley Schell | 49 |
| 1-2 | Invisible Stalker | Johnathan M. Richards | 63 |
| 1-2 | Janx's Jinx | Kent Ertman | 56 |
| 1-2 | Little People, The | Matthew G. Adkins | 67 |
| 1-2 | Local Legend, A | Greg Rick & Brad Schell | 51 |
| 1-2 | One Winter's Night | David Zenz | 68 |
| 1-2 | Peer Amid the Waters | Johnathan M. Richards | 78 |
| 1-2 | Rudwilla's Stew | Christopher Perkins | 45 |
| 1-2 | Skulking Below | Darren Dare | 81 |
| 1-2 | Through the Night | Leonard Wilson | 29 |
| 1-3 | Bad Seeds | Kevin Carter | 79 |
| 1-3 | Bandits of Bunglewood, The | Christopher Perkins | 51 |
| 1-3 | Ghost at Widder Smithers', The | John Baichtal | 52 |
| 1-3 | Hot Day in L'Trel, A | Ted James Thomas Zuvich | 44 |
| 1-3 | Inheritance, The | Paul F. Culotta | 26 |
| 1-3 | Ironguard | Ed Greenwood | 18 |
| 1-3 | Keep for Sale | Peter Zollers | 79 |
| 1-3 | Orange and Black | Peter C. Spahn | 66 |
| 1-3 | Pakkililirr | Willie Walsh | 52 |

* Published in the *Dragon Annual* #3 (1998).

**Writer Spotlight: Willie Walsh**

A native of Ireland, Willie embedded a lot of humor and Irish folklore in his adventures. Among the quirkiest was "Huddle Farm," which features two feuding halfling families, the Huddles and the Suttons, and a mischievous leprechaun who wants to turn the halfling feud into all-out war. In "Pearlman's Curiosity," we explore a town suffering from a serious case of nilbogism, courtesy of a wizard's captured nilbog (which is "goblin" spelled backward). Not all of Willie's adventures tapped our funny bones. Some of his more serious fare was equally memorable, such as "Telar in Norbia," in which the search for a lost desert princess leads adventurers to a city that has risen from the desert sands.

**"In the Dwarven King's Court" (Issue #2)**
**"Huddle Farm" (Issue #12)**
**"Stranded on the Baron's Island" (Issue #14)**
**"Roarwater Caves" (Issue #15)**
**"Whitelake Mine" (Issue #18)**
**"Encounter in the Wildwood" (Issue #19)**
**"The Cauldron of Plenty" (Issue #21)**
**"The Pyramid of Jenkel" (Issue #23)**
**"A Hitch in Time" (Issue #24)**
**"Nine-Tenths of the Law" (Issue #26)**
**"Mightier than the Sword" (Issue #29)**
**"A Wrastle with Bertrum" (Issue #30)**
**"Telar in Norbia" (Issue #31)**
**"Pearlman's Curiosity" (Issue #32)**
**"Asflag's Unintentional Emporium" (Issue #36)**
**"The White Boar of Kilfay" (Issue #37)**
**"Fraggart's Contraption" (Issue #47)**
**"Back to the Beach" (Issue #50)**
**"Pakkililirr" (Issue #52)**
**"Clarshh's Sepulcher" (Issue #53)**
**"Briocht" (Issue #56)**
**"Iasc" (Issue #60)**

| Level | Adventure | Author(s) | Issue |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1-3 | Plundering Poppof | Andy Miller | 72 |
| 1-3 | Quoitine Quest | Greg Rick, Cal Rea & Kate Chadbourne | 73 |
| 1-3 | Race Against Time, A | Kent Ertman | 81 |
| 1-3 | Savage Beast | Ron Poirier | 55 |
| 1-3 | Scourge of Scalabar, The | Christopher Perkins | 74 |
| 1-3 | Song of the Fens | J. Bradley Schell | 40 |
| 1-3 | Stage Fright | Oliver Garbsch | 77 |
| 1-3 | Sunken Shadow, The | James Wyatt | 66 |
| 1-3 | Trouble with In-Laws, The | William Kenower | 68 |
| 1-3 | Whale, The | Wolfgang Baur | 35 |
| 1-3 | Wild in the Streets | W. Jason Peck | 62 |
| 1-3 | Wizard's Fate, A | Christopher Perkins | 37 |
| 1-4 | Ghost of Silverhill, The | Samuel Heath | 58 |
| 1-4 | King Oleg's Dilemma | Lee Sheppard | 43 |
| 1-4 | Mightier than the Sword | Willie Walsh | 29 |
| 1-4 | Pearlman's Curiosity | Willie Walsh | 32 |
| 1-4 | Siege of Kratys Freehold, The | Ted James Thomas Zuvich | 33 |
| 1-4 | Voyage of the Crimpshrine, The | Tony Ross | 59 |
| 1-5 | Pandora's Apprentice | Leonard Wilson | 38 |
| 1-6 | Old Man Katan and the Incredible, Edible Dancing Mushroom Band | Ted James Thomas Zuvich | 41 |
| 1-9 | Door to Darkness, The | James Wyatt | 81 |
| 2-3 | Centaur of Attention | Johnathan M. Richards | 60 |
| 2-3 | Dark Forest, The | Dan Salas | 22 |
| 2-3 | Enormously Inconvenient | Kent Ertman | 66 |
| 2-4 | All Things Nice | John Baichtal | 45 |
| 2-4 | Artist's Loving Touch, The | Charles C. Reed | 68 |
| 2-4 | Bigger They Are, The | Steve Johnson | 56 |
| 2-4 | Cauldron of Plenty, The | Willie Walsh | 21 |
| 2-4 | Day at the Market, A | Kevin Carter | 76 |
| 2-4 | Encounter in the Wildwood | Willie Walsh | 19 |
| 2-4 | Fruit of the Vine | Charles C. Reed | 76 |
| 2-4 | Homonculous Stew | Andrew DiFiore, Jr. | 70 |
| 2-4 | Jacob's Well | Randy Maxwell | 43 |
| 2-4 | Last of the Iron House | Jasper Jones | 39 |
| 2-4 | Menacing Malady, The | Christopher Perkins | 58 |
| 2-4 | Of Kings Unknown | Randy Maxwell | 25 |
| 2-4 | Their Master's Voice | Roger Baker | 37 |
| 2-4 | Troll Bridge | William S. Dean | 36 |

**"Chadranther's Bane" (Issue #18)**
**Written by Paul Hancock**

Imagine an adventure in which the heroes are shrunk to the size of grasshoppers. What dangers might they face in a wild garden? That's the premise of "Chadranther's Bane," which pits the heroes against snakes, insects, and various other desperate individuals caught by the shrinking effect. The adventurers must use their wits to survive, and that always makes an adventure memorable.

**Writer Spotlight: David Howery**

David Howery was a frequent contributor in the early years of *Dungeon*, and many of his adventures were set in jungles. In "The Elephant's Graveyard," the quest for precious ivory leads adventurers right into the clutches of Honapo, an evil priest with an elephant's head. The elephant theme would resurface years later in "Rogue," which pitted the adventures against a belligerent pachyderm. David was showed his fondness for the Greyhawk campaign setting by loosely basing many of his adventures there.

**"Falcon's Peak" (Issue #3)**
**"The Elephant's Graveyard" (Issue #15)**
**"The Leopard Men" (Issue #22)**
**"Ghazal" (Issue #30)**
**"Alicorn" (Issue #33)**
**"Ghost Dance" (Issue #32)**
**"Rogue" (Issue #34)**
**"Ransom" (Issue #42)**
**"Fiends of Tethyr" (Issue #54)**
**"The Land of Men with Tails" (Issue #56)**

| Level | Adventure | Author(s) | Issue |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2-4 | Unhallowed Ground | Dan De Fazio | 54 |
| 2-4 | Vaka's Curse, The | Ted James Thomas Zuvich | 50 |
| 2-4 | Whitelake Mine | Willie Walsh | 18 |
| 2-5 | Old Sea-Dog | Thomas M. Kane | 23 |
| 2-5 | Two for the Road | Tony Quick | 49 |
| 2-5 | Well of Lord Barcus, The | Roger Baker | 41 |
| 2-5 | Witch's Fiddle, The | Paul F. Culotta | 54 |
| 2+ | Wrastle with Bertrum, A | Willie Walsh | 30 |
| 3-4 | Deadfalls on Nightwood Trail | Jay Ouzts | 26 |
| 3-4 | Iasc | Willie Walsh | 60 |
| 3-4 | Trial of the Frog | Tito Leati | 78 |
| 3-4 | Whistledown's Mantrap | J. Bradley Schell | 42 |
| 3-5 | Ancient Blood | Grant and David Boucher | 20 |
| 3-5 | Cloaked in Fear | Peter C. Spahn | 57 |
| 3-5 | Dark Days in Welldale | J. Mark Bicking | 33 |
| 3-5 | Feast of Flesh, A | Peter R. Hopkins | 77 |
| 3-5 | Fetch! | Matt Maaske | 54 |
| 3-5 | Goblin Fever | Randy Maxwell | 46 |
| 3-5 | Hurly-Burly Brothers, The | Kevin Wilson | 52 |
| 3-5 | Is There an Elf in the House? | Rafael Fay & Dan De Fazio | 32 |
| 3-5 | Mother's Curse, The | John Guzzetta | 59 |
| 3-5 | Moving Day | Roger Baker | 43 |
| 3-5 | No Stone Unturned | Peter C. Spahn | 72 |
| 3-5 | Quelkin's Quandary | Christopher Perkins | 47 |
| 3-5 | Reflections | Lisa Doyle | 65 |
| 3-5 | Spellbook Masquerade | J. Lee Cunningham | 53 |
| 3-5 | Stumping the Party | Christopher Pomeroy | 69 |
| 3-5 | To Walk Beneath the Waves | W. Jason Peck | 77 |
| 3-5 | Unkindness of Ravens, The | Jason Kuhl | 65 |
| 3-5 | Vanishing Village, The | Marcus Rowland | 19 |
| 3-6 | Beyond the Glittering Veil | Steven Kurtz | 31 |
| 3-6 | Caveat Emptor | Ted James Thomas Zuvich | 58 |
| 3-6 | Courier Service | Ted James Thomas Zuvich | 27 |
| 3-6 | Crusader | Peter Lloyd-Lee | 76 |
| 3-6 | Dragon's Delve | Christopher Perkins | 62 |
| 3-6 | Ghost of Mistmoor, The | Leonard Wilson | 35 |
| 3-6 | Hopeful Dawn | Gary Lai | 41 |
| 3-6 | Lenny O'Brien's Pot o' Gold | J. Lee Cunningham | 49 |
| 3-6 | Serpent's Tooth, The | Nigel D. Findley | 19 |

**"House of Cards" (Issue #19)**
**Written by Randy Maxwell**

"House of Cards" combined dungeon exploration with the *Deck of Many Things* to create an adventure experience unlike anything seen before. The deck is both a treasure and a trap, guarding a tomb complex that's being used by the Night Masks thieves' guild as a lair. If the PCs want the deck for themselves, they must first gather all the cards, which is easier said than done.

**Writer Spotlight: Grant Boucher**

Every one of the six adventures that Grant Boucher wrote for *Dungeon* (several with his brother David) was immortalized on a cover. Not a bad record! Grant's ideas were meaty and wildly imaginative, and many of the adventure locations were memorable in and of themselves. The crystal diamond-shaped citadel floating over the lake of lava made the perfect lair for Flame the red dragon in "Out of the Ashes" . . . and the perfect tomb for the adventurers against whom he desired vengeance.

**"Into the Fire" (Issue #1)**
**"Trouble at Grog's" (Issue #4)**
**"The Plight of Cirria" (Issue #9)**
**"The Wererats of Relfren" (Issue #14)**
**"Out of the Ashes" (Issue #17)**
**"Ancient Blood" (Issue #20)**

**"Ancient Blood" (Issue #20)**
**By Grant & David Boucher**

What do you get when you infuse an adventure inspired by Norse mythology with a Gothic atmosphere? You get the chills,

| Level | Adventure | Author(s) | Issue |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3-7 | Asflag's Unintentional Emporium | Willie Walsh | 36 |
| 3-7 | Night of the Bloodbirds | Brian Corvello | 74 |
| 3-7 | Things That Go Bump in the Night | Rich Stump | 38 |
| 3-7 | Wedding Day | Paul F. Culotta | 59 |
| 3-7 | White Boar of Kilfay, The | Willie Walsh | 37 |
| 3-9 | Standing Stone of Sundown, The | Paul May | 25 |
| 4-5 | Beauty Corrupt | Kent Ertman | 63 |
| 4-5 | Nbod's Room | Jeff Crook | 51 |
| 4-5 | Rogue | David Howery | 34 |
| 4-6 | Aerie Borne | Ralph Rea & Greg Rick | 40 |
| 4-6 | Avenging Murik | Christopher Perkins | 66 |
| 4-6 | Blood on the Plow | Lance Hawvermale | 62 |
| 4-6 | Chadranther's Bane | Paul Hancock | 18 |
| 4-6 | First People | Kent Ertman | 74 |
| 4-6 | Granite Mountain Prison | Roger Baker | 36 |
| 4-6 | Honor Lost, Honor Regained | Paul Hamilton Beattie, Jr. | 48 |
| 4-6 | Khamsa's Folly | J. Mark Bicking | 40 |
| 4-6 | Knight of the Scarlet Sword | Jeff Crook | 65 |
| 4-6 | Maze of the Morkoth, The | James Wyatt | 70 |
| 4-6 | Necromancer's Pet, The | Jason Duke | 73 |
| 4-6 | Nymph's Reward | Jeff Fairbourn | 29 |
| 4-6 | Shades of Darkness | David C. Wright | 47 |
| 4-6 | Swing Shot! | Chris Doyle | 66 |
| 4-6 | Tomb It May Concern | Randy Maxwell | 22 |
| 4-6 | Unexpected Guests | Jeffrey P. Carpenter | 78 |
| 4-6 | Vale of Weeping Willows, The | Marc Johnson | 74 |
| 4-6 | Veiled Threats | Peter R. Hopkins | 78 |
| 4-6 | Wind Chill | Kevin Carter | 77 |
| 4-7 | Eyes of the Iceborn | Jeff Crook | 54 |
| 4-7 | Ghost Dance | David Howery | 32 |
| 4-7 | Juggernaut | Roger E. Moore | 27 |
| 4-7 | Legerdemain | Matthew Schutt | 39 |
| 4-7 | Non-Prophet Organization | Charles C. Reed | 75 |
| 4-7 | North of Narborel | Christopher Perkins and Bob Waldbauer | 49 |
| 4-7 | Tallow's Deep | Steve Gilbert & Bill Slavicsek | 18 |
| 4-7 | Wyrmsmere | Christopher Perkins | ** |
| 4-8 | Cloudkill | Jeff Fairbourn | 79 |
| 4-8 | Curse and the Quest, The | Craig Barrett & Christopher Kederich | 26 |

** Published in the *Dragon Annual* #1 (1996).

which is exactly what "Ancient Blood" promises and delivers. The adventure takes heroes deep inside the frozen stronghold of Mok-Turoknin, a long-dead frost giant warlord who lingers as a terrible ghost.

**"Deception Pass" (Issue #23)**
**Written by Rich Stump**

A narrow pass through the mountains has become too dangerous for merchant caravans, leading the adventurers to clear the way. "Deception Pass" plays heavily on themes of trickery and misdirection and features a cunning group of ogre mages and their enslaved bronze dragon. Every ogre mage has a unique personality and agenda, which makes this adventure stand out all the more.

**"A Rose for Talakara" (Issue #25)**
**Written by Wolfgang Baur & Steve Kurtz**

Sympathetic villains are hard to pull off, but Wolfgang and Steve pulled it off perfectly in "A Rose for Talakara," which features a skeleton warrior named Agrovale. He has been bound to perform unspeakable acts for his evil mistress, Talakara, but longs to destroy her and free himself from her tyranny. In one of the cleverest tales ever to grace *Dungeon*'s pages, he uses the adventurers to do his "dirty work" for him.

**"The Ghost of Mistmoor" (Issue #35)**
**Written by Leonard Wilson**

When a young nobleman's rightful claim to his family estate is threatened by a ghost, he hires adventurers to help him find whatever treasure his

| Level | Adventure | Author(s) | Issue |
|---|---|---|---|
| 5-6 | Ulrich Monastery, The | Peter Aberg | 39 |
| 5-7 | Amulet and the Underdark, The | William Kenower | 75 |
| 5-7 | Dark Place, The | Lee Sheppard | 49 |
| 5-7 | Fortune Favors the Dead | Lance Hawvermale | 80 |
| 5-7 | Land of Men with Tails, The | David Howery | 56 |
| 5-7 | Mertylmane's Road | Jason Poole & Craig Zipse | 76 |
| 5-7 | Night Swarm | Lorri E. Hulbert | 61 |
| 5-7 | Petrifying Priestess, The | Brian Corvello | 66 |
| 5-7 | To Save a Forest | Dovjosef Anderson | 61 |
| 5-7 | Tulips of the Silver Moon | Steve Loken | 55 |
| 5-8 | Ex Libris | Randy Maxwell | 29 |
| 5-8 | Green Lady's Sorrow | Joseph O'Neil | 35 |
| 5-8 | To Cure a Kingdom | John A. Hartshorne | 57 |
| 5-8 | Winter Tapestry, The | Stephen C. Klauk | 78 |
| 5-9 | By Merklan's Magic | Brian Corvello | 68 |
| 5-9 | Floating Rock | Steve Kurtz | 46 |
| 5-10 | Uzaglu of the Underdark | Christopher Perkins | 67 |
| 6-8 | Boulder Dash | Andy Miller | 70 |
| 6-8 | Chest of the Aloeids, The | Craig H. Barrett | 21 |
| 6-8 | Eye of the Storm | Lance Hawvermale | 67 |
| 6-8 | Fiends of Tethyr | David Howery | 54 |
| 6-8 | Flotsam | John Baichtal | 65 |
| 6-8 | Forgotten Man, The | Steve Devaney | 75 |
| 6-8 | Ghazal | David Howery | 30 |
| 6-8 | Lady of the Mists, The | Peter Aberg | 42 |
| 6-8 | Melody | Leonard & Ann Wilson | 48 |
| 6-8 | My Lady's Mirror | Christopher Perkins | 52 |
| 6-8 | Prism Keep | Richard Baker | 45 |
| 6-8 | Stepping Stones | Lisa Smedman | 68 |
| 6-8 | Telar in Norbia | Willie Walsh | 31 |
| 6-8 | Wildspawn | Paul F. Culotta | 71 |
| 6-9 | Ailamere's Lair | Steve Fetsch | 51 |
| 6-9 | Esmerelda's Bodyguard | Paul F. Culotta | 62 |
| 6-9 | Hunt for a Hierophant | Chris Doyle | 63 |
| 6-9 | Mad Chefs of Lac Anchois, The | Jennifer Tittle Stack | 64 |
| 6-9 | Trouble with Trillochs, The | Peter R. Hopkins | 80 |
| 6-9 | Wayward Wood, The | Leonard Wilson | 32 |
| 6-10 | By the Wayside | Tim Villademoros | 19 |
| 6-10 | Rat Trap, The | Timothy Ide | 62 |

ancestors might have hidden in the old mansion and deal with the threat. What they uncover is an elaborate hoax concocted by a rogue eager to claim the lost Mistmoor treasures for herself . . . which isn't to say there aren't real undead creatures lurking about! "The Ghost of Mistmoor" is clever, creepy, and full of surprises.

**"The Mud Sorcerer's Tomb" (Issue #37)**
**Written by Mike Shel**

"The Mud Sorcerer's Tomb" pays homage to several classic D&D adventures, most notably *Tomb of Horrors*. Arguably the best dungeon crawl ever to grace the magazine, it features a sprawling tomb complex riddled with puzzles, traps, and monsters—at once deadly but never unfair. Smart players are duly rewarded for their efforts, and there are plenty of mysteries to solve along the way, including the identity of the tomb's architect. This adventure is so good that it was updated to the 3rd Edition rules in Issue #138, where it got the full cover treatment.

**Writer Spotlight: Randy Maxwell**

Randy Maxwell is not only one of *Dungeon*'s most prolific and versatile contributors but also produced a number of adventures with nifty components and gimmicks. "House of Cards" used cutout cards of the *Deck of Many Things* and cleverly worked them into the adventure. "Ex Libris" featured cut-out tiles representing the magically shifting rooms of a mysterious extradimensional library below Bard Keep, and "Goblin Fever" (#46) featured geomorphs that the DM could use to map out an entire city! In his bio for his last adventure, "Shards of the Day," Randy wrote: "There is no better cure for hubris than getting a manuscript back with what you considered a well-crafted encounter marked 'This is stupid' in large, red letters."

| Level | Adventure | Author(s) | Issue |
|---|---|---|---|
| 6-10 | Serpents of the Sands | John DiCicco | 37 |
| 6-10 | Train of Events | Timothy Ide | 44 |
| 6-12 | School of Nekros, The | Lisa Smedman | 27 |
| 7-9 | Deception Pass | Richard Stump | 23 |
| 7-9 | Earth Tones | Craig Shackleton | 76 |
| 7-9 | Shards of the Day | Randy Maxwell | 60 |
| 7-9 | Ship of Night, The | Wolfgang Baur | 20 |
| 7-10 | Dragonwyr | Christopher Perkins | *** |
| 7-10 | Hermes' Bridge | Timothy Leech | 32 |
| 7-10 | Hitch in Time, A | Willie Walsh | 24 |
| 7-10 | Nine-Tenths of the Law | Willie Walsh | 26 |
| 7-10 | Sarfion's Collection | Felix Douglas | 80 |
| 7-10 | Smouldering Mane | Rona Kreekel | 47 |
| 7-10 | Watery Death, A | J. Lee Cunningham | 56 |
| 7-12 | That Island Charm | M. S. Rooney, Patrick Carpenter & Greg Gliedman | 33 |
| 8-10 | 'Til Death Do Us Part | J. Mark Bicking | 29 |
| 8-10 | Changeling | R. Nathaniel Waldbauer | 32 |
| 8-10 | Fire Giant's Daughter, The | Wolfgang Baur | 39 |
| 8-10 | Incident at Strathern Point | Matthew Maaske | 21 |
| 8-10 | Journey to the Center of the World | Chris Hind | 51 |
| 8-10 | Leopard Men, The | David Howery | 22 |
| 8-10 | Pyramid of Jenkel, The | Willie Walsh | 23 |
| 8-10 | Twilight's Last Gleaming | James Jacobs | 35 |
| 8-11 | Lady Rose, The | Steven Kurtz | 34 |
| 8-12 | Blight on the Land, A | Richard Green | 38 |
| 8-12 | Divisions of the Mind | Charles C. Reed | 81 |
| 8-12 | Into the Silver Realm | Steve Kurtz | 43 |
| 8-12 | Rose for Talakara, A | Wolfgang Baur & Steven Kurtz | 25 |
| 8-12 | Thiondar's Legacy | Steven Kurtz | 30 |
| 8-12 | Thunder Under Needlespire | James Jacobs | 24 |
| 9-10 | Dark Thane Macbeth | Michael Selinker | 54 |
| 9-10 | Spirits of the Tempest | Michael Selinker | 52 |
| 9-11 | Lear the Giant King | Michael Selinker | 78 |
| 9-12 | House of Cards | Randy Maxwell | 19 |
| 9-12 | Sleepless | Michael Shel | 28 |
| 9-12 | To Bite the Moon | Lisa Smedman | 48 |
| 9-14 | Khazefryn | Felix Douglas | 81 |
| 9+ | Gritzel's Guidance | J. Bradley Schell | 45 |

*** Published in the *Dragon Annual* #2 (1997).

**"White Death" (Issue #6)**
**"The Ghostship Gambit" (Issue #9)**
**"Of Nests and Nations" (Issue #13)**
**"Masqueraider" (Issue #14)**
**"House of Cards" (Issue #19)**
**"Pride of the Sky" (Issue #20)**
**"Tomb It May Concern" (Issue #22)**
**"The Vineyard Vales" (Issue #23)**
**"Of Kings Unknown" (Issue #25)**
**"Ex Libris" (Issue #29)**
**". . . And a Dozen Eggs" (Issue #30)**
**"Isle of the Abbey" (Issue #34)**
**"Jacob's Well" (Issue #43)**
**"Raiders of the Chanth" (Issue #44)**
**"Goblin Fever" (Issue #46)**
**"Shards of the Day" (Issue #60)**

### "Horror's Harvest" (Issue #38)
### Written by Christopher Perkins

This Ravenloft adventure shows what happens to a small town after a comet crashes in the nearby woods and sprouts an evil plant that takes over the minds of nearby folk, turning them against anyone it perceives as a threat. How the heroes deal with the enslaved townsfolk is the crux of the adventure.

### "Son of the Fens" (Issue #40)
### Written by J. Bradley Schell

Brad Schell would go on to write several adventures for *Dungeon*, but his first offering tells the tale of a peculiar romance involving an innkeeper's daughter and a singing troll. When the innkeeper's daughter falls in love with the

| Level | Adventure | Author(s) | Issue |
|---|---|---|---|
| 10 | White Fang | Nigel D. Findley | 20 |
| 10-12 | Briocht | Willie Walsh | 56 |
| 10-12 | Deep Trouble in Telthin | John A. Hartshorne | 72 |
| 10-14 | Mud Sorcerer's Tomb, The | Mike Shel | 37 |
| 10-15 | Castle of the Blind Sun | Paul & Shari Culotta and Todd Baughman | 49 |
| 10-15 | Preemptive Strike | Paul F. Culotta | 74 |
| 10+ | Deadly Treasure | Coby Hedberg | 41 |
| 11-15 | Iron Orb of the Duergar | Peter Aberg | 46 |
| 12-14 | Izek's Slumber | Gary Lai | 42 |
| 12-15 | Bzallin's Blacksphere | Christopher Perkins | 64 |
| Any | Challenge of Champions | Johnathan M. Richards | 58 |
| Any | Challenge of Champions II | Johnathan M. Richards | 69 |
| Any | Challenge of Champions III | Johnathan M. Richards | 80 |

## Dungeons & Dragons 3.0

| Level | Adventure | Author(s) | Issue |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Bogged Down | Terry Edwards | 91 |
| 1 | Evil Unleashed | Ed Stark | 82 |
| 1 | Gorgoldand's Gauntlet | Johnathan M. Richards | 87 |
| 1 | Hollow Threats | Richard Pett | 96 |
| 1 | Legend of Garthulga, The | Tim Hitchcock | 91 |
| 1 | Provincial Prior Cause | Johnny L. Wilson | 96 |
| 1 | Swarm, The | Tito Leati | 92 |
| 1 | Tinderbox | Michael Selinker | 87 |
| 1 | Valley of the Snails | W. Jason Peck | 87 |
| 2 | Dead of Winter, The | Keith Francis Strohm | * |
| 2 | Ever-Changing Fortunes | Peter Zollers | 85 |
| 2 | Playing with Fire | Jeff Grubb | 82 |
| 3 | Dark Times in Sherwood | Ian Malcomson | 82 |
| 3 | Depths of Rage | JD Wiker | 83 |
| 3 | Dungeon of the Fire Opal | Jonathan Tweet | 84 |
| 3 | Excavation, The | Michael T. Kuciak | 94 |
| 3 | Eye for an Eye | Patrick W. Ross | 82 |
| 3 | Stormdancers | Ole Münch | 86 |
| 3 | Witch of Serpent Bridge, The | Russell Brown | 95 |
| 4 | Gluttony | J. Bradley Schell | 98 |
| 4 | Iriandel | Tito Leati | 83 |
| 4 | Last Hunt, The | James Wilbur | 94 |

* Published on the CD-ROM included with early printings of the *Player's Handbook* v.3.0.

troll's dulcet tones, the innkeeper fears she has been bewitched and hires adventurers to seek out the source of the music. "Song of the Fens" is a romance written in blood.

**Writer Spotlight: Ted James Thomas Zuvich**

In his second adventure for *Dungeon*, Ted Zuvich gave us something we'd never seen before: an adventure built around an orc siege. In "The Siege of Kratys Freehold," the adventurers didn't have to go in search of monsters—the monsters came to them. Ted's next outing, "Old Man Katan and the Incredible, Edible, Dancing Mushroom Band," is a hilarious romp about a man who tries to escape his grim past by becoming a swamp hermit. When the heroes cross paths with Old Man Katan and his singing mushrooms, things start to get a little crazy.

**"Courier Service" (Issue #27)**
**"The Siege of Kratys Freehold" (Issue #33)**
**"Old Man Katan and the Incredible, Edible, Dancing Mushroom Band" (Issue #41)**
**"A Hot Day in L'Trel" (Issue #44)**
**"Dovedale" (Issue #46)**
**"The Vaka's Curse" (Issue #50)**
**"Caveat Emptor" (Issue #58)**

**"The Lady of the Mists" (Issue #42)**
**Written by Peter Aberg**

"The Lady of the Mists" was inspired by the hauntingly beautiful music of Ennio Morricone and written for players who like mysteries. It's a tale of friendships broken, of love betrayed, and of years spent in dreadful loneliness, set in the ruins of a once-great castle that is now shrouded in mist. It's about a woman who discovers how to make herself and her friends immortal and the unintended consequences of that immortality. Into this story the heroes are thrust, and although Lucilla is portrayed as a tragic figure, her castle is nothing short of deadly!

| Level | Adventure | Author(s) | Issue |
|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | Lust | J. Bradley Schell | 95 |
| 4 | Rivers of Blood | Paul Leach | 89 |
| 4 | Swamp Stomp | Jeff Ward | 93 |
| 4 | Totentanz | Bernard Mees | 90 |
| 4 | Wedding Bells | Jonathan Tweet | 89 |
| 5 | Demonclaw | Peter R. Hopkins | 84 |
| 5 | Fish Story | Adam Jortner | 99 |
| 5 | Natural Selection | Matthew G. Adkins | 85 |
| 5 | Pandemonium in the Veins | Frank Brunner | 96 |
| 5 | Prey for Tyrinth | Tim Hitchcock | 90 |
| 5 | Shalm's Dark Song, The | Tito Leati | 87 |
| 5 | Vanity | J. Bradley Schell | 93 |
| 6 | Blind Man's Bluff | Rob Manning | 97 |
| 6 | Rana Mor | Richard Baker | 86 |
| 6 | Sloth | J. Bradley Schell | 91 |
| 7 | Armistice | Peter Vinogradov | 84 |
| 7 | Bloodlines | Luke Johnson | 94 |
| 7 | Flesh To Stone | Anthony Talanay | 85 |
| 7 | Mysterious Ways | Thomas Harlan | 86 |
| 7 | Rage | J. Bradley Schell | 89 |
| 7 | Seventh Arm, The | Tito Leati | 88 |
| 8 | Elfwhisper, The | J. C. Alvarez | 90 |
| 8 | Wings, Spikes, and Teeth | Brian Marsden | 98 |
| 9 | Jackal's Redemption, The | Chad MacPhee & Greg Oppedisano | 95 |
| 9 | Make It Big | Jeff Quick | 88 |
| 9 | Statue Gallery, The | Johnathan M. Richards | 93 |
| 10 | Dying of the Light, The | Chris Doyle | 84 |
| 10 | Porphyry House Horror | James Jacobs | 95 |
| 11 | Return of the Blessed Damozel | Frank Brunner | 92 |
| 11 | Spiral of Manzessine | David Noonan | 94 |
| 13 | Beyond the Light of Reason | Caine Chandler | 96 |
| 13 | Heart of the Iron God | Campbell Pentney | 97 |
| 13 | Interlopers of Ruun-Khazai | David Noonan | 92 |
| 15 | Glacier Season | David Eckelberry | 87 |
| 15 | Harrowing, The | Monte Cook | 84 |
| 15 | Worms in the Exchequery | Frank Brunner | 94 |
| 16 | Demonblade | Hank Woon | 97 |
| 16 | Rock and the Hard Place, The | Brian Corvello | 91 |
| 20 | Razing of Redshore, The | James Jacobs | 92 |

**"Jacob's Well" (Issue #43)**
**Written by Randy Maxwell**

This adventure is best described as D&D meets *Alien*. The adventurers are drawn to a trading post and discover, to their horror, that one of its other visitors is host to a baby red slaad. As a winter storm keeps the inhabitants confined, the newborn slaad stalks the compound, and survival becomes a hard-won and precious commodity. As fear and paranoia spreads, the situation becomes more dire, and the tension unbearable!

**"Train of Events" (Issue #44)**
**Written by Timothy Ide**

"Train of Events" teased *Dungeon* readers with a steam-powered dwarven locomotive and gave new meaning to the phrase "underground railroad." When a combined force of derro and duergar threaten the Targhazarn Mining Company's livelihood, the adventures step in to make sure the train runs on time. As impressive as the adventure itself are the interior black-and-white illustrations, which were done by the adventure's writer, Timothy Ide.

**"The Assassin Within" (Issue #47)**
**Written by Paul F. Culotta**

*Dungeon*'s first Al-Qadim adventure pits the adventurers against a truly menacing villain: the holy slayer Farid al Tigrar. Farid has vowed to kill every member of a family whose patriarch is Professor Hakim bin Rashad. Farid infiltrates Hakim's estate, and as family members begin dropping like flies, the only ones who can stop the assassin are the adventurers. However, finding the elusive assassin is no simple matter.

| Level | Adventure | Author(s) | Issue |
|---|---|---|---|
| Any | Challenge of Champions IV | Johnathan M. Richards | 91 |

## Dungeons & Dragons 3.5

| Level | Adventure | Author(s) | Issue |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Box of Flumph | Tim Hitchcock | 118 |
| 1 | Escape from Meenlock Prison | Tim and Eileen Connors | 146 |
| 1 | Masque of Dreams | B. Matthew Conklin III | 142 |
| 1 | Night of the Straw Men | Stephen J. Smith | 154 |
| 1 | Siege of the Spider Eaters | Tim and Eileen Connors | 137 |
| 2 | Cry Wolf | Nicolas Logue | 102 |
| 2 | Devil Box, The | Richard Pett | 109 |
| 2 | Salvage Operation | Mike Mearls | 123 |
| 2 | Shut-in | F. Wesley Schneider & James Lafond Sutter | 128 |
| 2 | Urban Decay | Amber E. Scott | 138 |
| 3 | Beasts of Aulbesmil, The | Skip Williams | 131 |
| 3 | Buzz on the Bridge, The | John Simcoe | 110 |
| 3 | Distraction, The | Tim Hitchcock | 145 |
| 3 | Final Resting Place | Michael Kortes | 122 |
| 3 | Home Under the Range | Michael Kortes | 134 |
| 3 | Kill Bargle | Jason Bulmahn | 150 |
| 3 | Unfamiliar Ground | Christopher West | 119 |
| 4 | Automatic Hound, The | James Lafond Sutter | 148 |
| 4 | Fiend's Embrace | Stephen S. Greer | 121 |
| 4 | Obsidian Eye, The | Nicolas Logue & Brendan Victorson | 120 |
| 4 | Stink, The | Monte Lin | 105 |
| 4 | Tensions Rising | Ryan Smalley | 136 |
| 4 | Wingclipper's Revenge | Christopher Wissel | 132 |
| 5 | Hive, The | Phillip Larwood | 127 |
| 5 | Palace of the Twisted King | Phillip Larwood | 116 |
| 5 | War of the Wielded | Michael Kortes | 149 |
| 6 | Beast of Burden | Michael Kortes | 100 |
| 6 | Caravan of Glauu the Seer | David Noonan | 153 |
| 6 | Fiendish Footprints | Tito Leati | 122 |
| 6 | Last Breaths of Ashenport, The | Ari Marmell | 152 |
| 6 | Mellorn Hospitality | Russell Brown | 107 |
| 6 | Menagerie, The | B. Matthew Conklin III | 126 |
| 6 | Tealpeck's Flood | Peter Vinogradov | 137 |
| 6 | Torrents of Dread | Greg A. Vaughan | 114 |
| 6 | Witching Season | B. Matthew Conklin III | 153 |

**Recurring Theme:**
**Parties in Prisons!**

What are prisons if not big, sprawling dungeons? Over the years, the magazine has presented several cleverly constructed and horrifying prisons. In "Ghazal" (Issue #30), adventurers must free a Greyhawk diplomat from a slave prison in the Abbor-Alz desert. "Granite Mountain Prison" (Issue #36) features a massive underground prison that turns like a great wheel, where prison sentences are measured in revolutions. In "Chains of Blackmaw" (Issue #135), the heroes go uncover as prisoners to protect a man wrongfully incarcerated for murder. A neglected prison hidden below a vineyard is the setting of "Escape from Meenlock Prison" (Issue #146). "Into the Maw" (Issue #147) takes place in a volcanic island prison, while "Hell's Heart" (Issue #151) unfolds in a horrid prison-asylum in the bowels of Sharn, Eberron's famed City of Towers. But no prison instills more terror than the one run by mind flayers in "Spiral of Manzessine" (Issue #94).

**"Ailamere's Lair" (Issue #51)**
**Written by Steve Fetsch**

A reputable dragon hunter believes she has discovered a new breed of dragon, and she hires the adventurers to spy on it for her, but the elusive Ailamere is anything but your typical dragon, and both her lair and the surrounding environs hold many dangers. Steve Fetsch's sole contribution to *Dungeon* magazine is a feast for roleplayers and risk-takers—and not your typical dragon hunt by any stretch of the imagination.

**Common Ground: Shakespearean Adventures**

Michael Selinker wrote three adventures for *Dungeon* based on the plays of William Shakespeare. The first, "Spirits of the Tempest" (Issue #52), transported adventurers to a strange island ruled by the wizard Prospero and inhabited by all manner of tricksy fey

| Level | Adventure | Author(s) | Issue |
|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | Chasm Bridge, The | Desmond R. Varady | 101 |
| 7 | Dragon Hunters | Peter Zollers | 104 |
| 7 | Forsaken Arch | Timothy J. Haener | 120 |
| 7 | Glacial Inferno | Kent Ertman | 103 |
| 8 | Caverns of the Ooze Lord | Campbell Pentney | 132 |
| 9 | And Madness Followed | Matthew Hope | 134 |
| 9 | Fall of Graymalkin Academy, The | Mark A. Hart | 140 |
| 9 | Styes, The | Richard Pett | 121 |
| 10 | Chains of Blackmaw | Nicolas Logue | 135 |
| 10 | Teleport Gone Awry | David Noonan | 152 |
| 10 | Touch of Madness | Robert J. Schwalb | 153 |
| 10 | Weavers, The | Richard Pett | 138 |
| 11 | Iggwilv's Legacy: The Lost Caverns of Tsojcanth | Ari Marmell, C. A. Suleiman & Edward Albert | 151 |
| 11 | Iron Satyr, The | Scott Stearns | 108 |
| 12 | Black Egg, The | Steven Montano | 106 |
| 12 | Death of Lashimire | Tim Hitchcock | 116 |
| 12 | Old Embers Never Die | Andy Collins | 100 |
| 12 | Swords of Dragonslake | Nicolas Logue | 141 |
| 13 | Amarantha Agenda, The | Phillip Larwood | 123 |
| 13 | Mask of Diamond Tears | Nicolas Logue | 143 |
| 14 | Moagim's Clone | Ryan Smalley | 152 |
| 14 | Mud Sorcerer's Tomb, The | Mike Shel | 138 |
| 14 | Tomb of Aknar Ratalla | Jack Flynn | 119 |
| 14 | Winding Way, The | Nicolas Logue | 117 |
| 15 | Plague Tree, The | Greg A. Vaughan | 152 |
| 15 | Seekers of the Silver Forge | Tim Hitchcock | 125 |
| 15 | Strike on the Rabid Dawn | Frank Brunner | 111 |
| 16 | Bright Mountain King | Caine Chandler | 142 |
| 18 | Diplomacy | Christopher Wissel | 144 |
| 18 | Gates of Oblivion | Alec Austin | 136 |
| 18 | Lich-Queen's Beloved, The | Christopher Perkins | 100 |
| 18 | Prisoner of the Castle Perilous | Stephen S. Greer | 153 |
| 18 | Root of Evil | Mike Mearls | 122 |
| 18 | Vlindarian's Vault | Johnathan M. Richards | 141 |
| 20 | Essence of Evil | Robert J. Schwalb | 152 |
| 30 | Quicksilver Hourglass, The | Anson Caralya | 123 |
| Any | Challenge of Champions V | Johnathan M. Richards | 108 |
| Any | Challenge of Champions VI | Johnathan M. Richards | 138 |

spirits and elemental monsters. Next came "Dark Thane Macbeth" (Issue #54), a tale of ambition with a decidedly drow spin. Finally, Mike took it up a notch with "Lear the Giant-King" (Issue #78), which featured a storm giant and his unruly daughters.

**"Umbra" (Issue #55)**
**Written by Christopher Perkins**

Dungeon's first PLANESCAPE adventure tackles themes of destiny and bad parenting. Set in Sigil, the City of Doors, it deals with events surrounding a child custody battle between one of the leaders of the Harmonium and a succubus, with the fate of their alu-fiend daughter, Umbra, hanging in the balance. Things get complicated when it's revealed that Umbra's the key to a disturbing prophecy left behind by a long-dead faction, a prophecy that leads adventurers into conflict with those who wish to see it come true.

**"The Murder of Maury Miller" (Issue #57)**
**Written by Cameron Widen**

There are two things certain in life: death and taxes. The people of Lowick suffer under the yoke of a greedy tax collector whom many blame for the death and disappearance of a disgruntled local miller, but a series of mysterious fires and the sightings of a walking scarecrow cast some doubt. "The Murder of Maury Miller" is a mystery of the finest sort, sure to keep players on the edge of their seats!

**The Challenge of Champions Series (Issues #58, 69, 80, 91, 108, and 138)**
**Written by Johnathan M. Richards**

What do adventurers do when they're not adventuring? Throw themselves into harm's way for fame and glory, of course! Each "Challenge of Champions"

# Dungeons & Dragons 4.0

| Level | Adventure | Author(s) | Issue |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | Temple of the Weeping Goddess | Philippe-Antoine Menard | 194 |
| 1 | Coppernight's Salvation | Shawn Merwin | 178 |
| 1 | Keep on the Shadowfell: Side Treks | Peter Schaefer | 155 |
| 2 | Den of Dreus, The | Logan Bonner | 179 |
| 2 | Dungeon of the Ghost Tower | Robert J. Schwalb | 182 |
| 3 | Remains of the Empire | Kolja Raven Liquette | 165 |
| 3 | Storm Tower | Christopher Perkins | 166 |
| 3 | Tariff of Relkingham, The | Eytan Bernstein | 158 |
| 3-5 | Battle of the Witchlight Hermitage | Sterling Hershey | 191 |
| 3-5 | Evard's Shadow | Daniel Marthaler | 192 |
| 3-5 | Sunken Tower of the Marsh Mystic | Ray Franklin | 186 |
| 3-8 | Andok Sur | Bill Slavicsek | 187 |
| 4 | Heathen | Scott Fitzgerald Gray | 155 |
| 4 | Nightmares Unleashed | Craig Campbell | 177 |
| 4 | Stormcrow Tor | Bruce R. Cordell | 169 |
| 4-6 | Leader of the Pack | Julian Sieber | 194 |
| 5-7 | Bark at the Moon | Robert J. Schwalb | 185 |
| 5-7 | Going Ape! | John Rossomangno | 192 |
| 5-7 | Knight in Shadowghast Manor, A | Ken Hart | 197 |
| 6 | Echoes of Thunderspire Labyrinth | Greg Bilsland | 156 |
| 6 | Tyrant's Oath, The | Kolja Raven Liquette | 178 |
| 6-8 | Lord of the White Field | Daniel Marthaler | 184 |
| 7 | Danger at the White Lotus Academy | Peter Schaefer | 165 |
| 7 | Oasis of the Golden Peacock | Tim Eagon | 169 |
| 7 | Treed! | Tim Eagon | 171 |
| 7-9 | Blood Money | Logan Bonner | 200 |
| 7-9 | Head in the Clouds | Matt Sernett | 184 |
| 8 | Last Breaths of Ashenport, The | Ari Marmell | 156 |
| 8 | Massacre at Fort Dolor | Shawn Merwin | 157 |
| 8 | Return of the Poisoned Shadows | Greg Marks | 164 |
| 8 | Sleeper in the Tomb of Dreams | Matthew Sernett | 155 |
| 8-10 | Reign of Despair | Andrew G. Schneider | 191 |
| 9 | House of Pain | Jennifer Clarke Wilkes | 163 |
| 9-11 | Force of Nature | Kolja Raven Liquette | 190 |
| 10 | Dark Heart of Mithrendain | Greg Marks | 157 |
| 10 | Touch of Madness | Robert J. Schwalb | 161 |
| 10-12 | Baelard's Legacy | Joshua Kerbau | 188 |

adventure presented a series of puzzles with player handouts (visual aids) designed to tax players' brains and force them to work as a team, scoring points for their efforts. The challenges were ingenious and often deadly, although no characters were ever permanently harmed.

**"The Mother's Curse" (Issue #59)**
**Written by John Guzzetta**

It doesn't get any creepier than this, folks! The owner of the Three Anchors Inn in the village of Monetenapoleone has a pregnant daughter who's about to give birth, but to what? The innkeeper fears that an evil hag has switched babies with his daughter—not the first time this sort of thing has happened to the good people of this poor little village. To save the young girl's child, the adventures must travel to an abbey in the swamp, face the hag, and end the curse.

**"Jigsaw" (Issue #61)**
**Written by Dan De Fazio & Christina A. Stiles**

The writers of "Jigsaw" had never met. They spoke on the phone a couple times and cobbled the adventure together via the U.S. Mail. Designed for the Ravenloft *Masque of the Red Death* setting, "Jigsaw" takes place in Switzerland, a little north of Lake Geneva (*heh heh*), and provides an intriguing spin on the classic Frankenstein tale. Udo the Jigsaw Man isn't your run-of-the-mill monster or carnival freak, but he's certainly dangerous. No other D&D adventure offers a more elegant blend of romance, horror, and tragedy.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 10-12 | Runecutter's Ruin, The | Logan Bonner | 186 |
| 11 | Beyond the Trollhaunt | Logan Bonner | 160 |
| 11 | Crown of the Troll King | Daniel Marthaler | 169 |
| 11 | Depths of Madness | Robert J. Schwalb | 162 |
| 11 | Hall of the Snake God | Robert J Schwalb | 169 |
| 11-13 | Killing Ground | Jason Wofford | 189 |
| 12 | Depths of Avarice | Tim Hitchcock | 157 |
| 12 | Haunting of Kincep Mansion, The | Skip Williams | 156 |
| 12 | Worse Than Death | Robert J. Schwalb | 164 |
| 12-14 | Steading of the Hill Giant Chief | Gary Gygax and Christopher Perkins | 197 |
| 12-14 | Whispering Glade, The | Steve Winter | 185 |
| 13 | Brink of Madness | Robert J. Schwalb | 163 |
| 13 | Clash of Steel | Jennifer Clarke Wilkes | 172 |
| 13 | Web of Chains | Owen K. C. Stephens | 168 |
| 13-15 | Baba Yaga's Dancing Hut | Craig Campbell | 196 |
| 14-16 | Warrens of the Stone Giant Thane | Christopher Perkins | 198 |
| 15 | Sea Reavers of the Shrouded Crags | Logan Bonner | 158 |
| 16 | Faarlung's Algorithm | Syd Thurston | 179 |
| 16-18 | Glacial Rift of the Frost Giant Jarl | Gary Gygax and Christopher Perkins | 199 |
| 17-19 | Devil's Due | John Rossomangno | 188 |
| 18 | Summer's End | Bill Slavicsek | 160 |
| 18-20 | Hall of the Fire Giant King | Gary Gygax and Christopher Perkins | 200 |
| 20-22 | Flame's Last Flicker | Shawn Merwin | 200 |
| 21 | Ziggurat Beyond Time, The | David Noonan | 159 |
| 22 | Winter of the Witch | Stephen Radney-MacFarland | 162 |
| 25 | Sand King's Daughter, The | Ari Marmell | 160 |
| Any | Cross City Race | James "Grim" Desborough | 176 |
| Any | Mihajla's Tent | Cameron Burry | 189 |
| Any | Sea Demon's Shrine, The | Richard Baker | 181 |

## Dungeons & Dragons Basic Rules

| Level | Adventure | Author(s) | Issue |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Fountain of Health, The | Ann Dupuis | 39 |
| 1 | Night of Fear | Mark Lucas | 28 |
| 1-3 | At the Spottle Parlor | Rick Swan | 12 |
| 1-3 | Dovedale | Ted James Thomas Zuvich | 46 |
| 1-3 | Elven Home, The | Anne Gray McCready | 1 |
| 1-3 | In the Dread of Night | Ann Dupuis | 24 |
| 1-3 | Isle of the Abbey | Randy Maxwell | 34 |
| 1-3 | Keep at Koralgesh, The | Robert B. Giacomozzi & Jonathan H. Simmons | 2 |

**Artist Spotlight: Tony DiTerlizzi**

Dave Gross once asked Tony DiTerlizzi to illustrate an entire issue of *Dungeon* (Issue #61), including the cover, which he did! Tony even wrote the editorial for that issue, which must be worth a fortune on eBay! In D&D circles, Tony is best known for defining the look of the Planescape setting, but his art style also reminded the viewer of illustrated children's fables–a style that served *The Spiderwick Chronicles* perfectly well. In all, Tony illustrated six *Dungeon* covers:

**"Umbra" (Issue #55)**
**"Jigsaw" (Issue #61)**
**"Hunt for a Hierophant" (Issue #63)**
**"Wildspawn" (Issue #71)**
**"Deep Trouble in Telthin" (Issue #72)**
**"Wedding Bells" (Issue #89)**

**"Last Dance" (Issue #64)**
**Written by Jeff Crook**

Madame Tuvache's "puppets" are to die for. Made from preserved human corpses, they dangle from wires and magically animated rigs that cause them dance. They can also be directed to attack. Such is the danger awaiting brave heroes who are lured into Madame Tuvache's dance academy. "Last Dance" presents a true Gothic nightmare the players will never forget!

**"The Mad Chefs of Lac Anchois" (Issue #64)**
**Written by Jennifer Tittle Stack**

Let it never be said that *Dungeon* contributors lack imagination. "Mad Chefs" introduces us to a pair of brotherly giants who wish to impress their critics by creating a culinary masterpiece–fricasseed frog legs! However, instead of capturing ordinary frogs, they

| Level | Adventure | Author(s) | Issue |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1-3 | Rank Amateurs | John Terra | 22 |
| 1-3 | Redcap's Rampage | Christopher Perkins | 54 |
| 1-3 | Them Apples | Christopher Perkins | 48 |
| 1-3 | Trouble with Mylvin Wimbly, The | Andrew McCray | 5 |
| 1-3 | Way with Words, A | Teeuwynn Woodruff & Tim Beach | 41 |
| 2-3 | Witch of Windcrag, The | Steven J. Smith | 51 |
| 2-4 | Vineyard Vales, The | Randy Maxwell | 23 |
| 3 | Djinni's Ring, The | Vince Garcia | 9 |

## Dungeons & Dragons Expert Rules

| Level | Adventure | Author(s) | Issue |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3-5 | Ransom | David Howery | 42 |
| 3-6 | Ghostship Gambit, The | Randy Maxwell | 9 |
| 3-6 | Wererats of Relfren, The | Grant Boucher & William K. Wenz | 14 |
| 4-6 | Manden's Meathooks | Allen Varney | 28 |
| 4-7 | Elexa's Endeavor | Christopher Perkins | 53 |
| 4-7 | Hrothgar's Resting Place | Stephen J. Smith | 25 |
| 4-10 | Tortles of the Purple Sage, Part 1 | Merle & Jackie Rasmussen | 6 |
| 4-10 | Tortles of the Purple Sage, Part 2 | Merle & Jackie Rasmussen | 7 |
| 5-8 | Object of Desire, The | Gary O'Connell & Lucya Szachnowski | 50 |
| 6-8 | Caravan Guards | Steven Smith | 26 |
| 6-9 | In Pursuit of the Slayer | Carl Sargent | 15 |
| 8-12 | Of Nests and Nations | Randy Maxwell | 13 |
| 8-12 | Pride of the Sky | Randy Maxwell | 20 |
| 9-12 | Hand of Al-Djamal | Stephen J. Smith | 44 |
| 10-14 | Tarfil's Tomb | Charles Neverdowski | 27 |
| 15-18 | Bane of Elfswood, The | Stephen J. Smith | 21 |

## Adventure Path: Age of Worms

| Level | Adventure | Author(s) | Issue |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Whispering Cairn, The | Erik Mona | 124 |
| 3 | Three Faces of Evil, The | Mike Mearls | 125 |
| 5 | Encounter at Blackwall Keep | Sean K Reynolds | 126 |
| 7 | Hall of Harsh Reflections | Jason Bulmahn | 127 |
| 9 | Champion's Belt, The | Tito Leati | 128 |
| 11 | Gathering of Winds, A | Wolfgang Baur | 129 |
| 13 | Spire of Long Shadows, The | Jesse Decker | 130 |

grab a bunch of young gripplis and incur the wrath of the grippli tribe mother. Naturally, the heroes are on hand when the perfect dinner goes horribly awry.

**"Operation Manta Ray" (Issue #66)**
**Written by Paul F. Culotta**

The Sembian government needs adventurers to extract one of its spies from the pirate citadel of Immurk's Hold. "Operation Manta Ray" lets the heroes go undercover as pirates and engage in espionage . . . at least until the jig is up and the pirates figure out what's going on. At that point, it's every spy for himself or herself as the adventurers make good their escape!

**Artist Spotlight: Diesel**

Dave LaForce, a.k.a. Diesel, worked as a cartographer at TSR until the company dissolved in the nineties, and he did most of the maps in the early issues of *Dungeon*. His black-and-white maps were clean and elegant, combining organic, hand-drawn elements with digital typography. Diesel could take the worst hand-drawn author map and turn it into art.

***The Mere of Dead Men* Series (Issues #69-73)**
**Written by Jason Kuhl, Kent Ertman, W. Jason Peck, Paul F. Culotta, and Eric L. Boyd**

*Dungeon*'s first "adventure path" was a series of five adventures set in the Mere of Dead Men, a swamp along the Sword Coast in the Forgotten Realms® setting. Each adventure presented a sinister new location to explore, building toward an epic battle against the black dragon Voaraghamanthar, his secret twin Waervaerendor, and the Followers of the Scaly Way.

| Level | Adventure | Author(s) | Issue |
|---|---|---|---|
| 15 | Prince of Redhand, The | Richard Pett | 131 |
| 16 | Library of Last Resort, The | Nicolas Logue | 132 |
| 18 | Kings of the Rift | Greg A. Vaughan | 133 |
| 19 | Into the Wormcrawl Fissure | James Jacobs | 134 |
| 20 | Dawn of a New Age | Tito Leati | 135 |

## Adventure Path: Savage Tide

| Level | Adventure | Author(s) | Issue |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | There Is No Honor | James Jacobs | 139 |
| 3 | Bullywug Gambit, The | Nicolas Logue | 140 |
| 5 | Sea Wyvern's Wake, The | Richard Pett | 141 |
| 7 | Here There Be Monsters | Jason Bulmahn | 142 |
| 9 | Tides of Dread | Stephen S. Greer & Gary Holian | 143 |
| 11 | Lightless Depths, The | F. Wesley Schneider & James Lafond Sutter | 144 |
| 13 | City of Broken Idols | Tito Leati | 145 |
| 15 | Serpents of Scuttlecove | Richard Pett | 146 |
| 17 | Into the Maw | Robert J. Schwalb | 147 |
| 18 | Wells of Darkness | Eric L. Boyd | 148 |
| 19 | Enemies of My Enemy | Wolfgang Baur | 149 |
| 20 | Prince of Demons | Greg A. Vaughan | 150 |

## Adventure Path: Scales of War

| Level | Adventure | Author(s) | Issue |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Rescue at Rivenroar | David Noonan | 156 |
| 3 | Siege of Bordrin's Watch, The | Robert J. Schwalb | 157 |
| 4 | Shadow Rift of Umbraforge, The | Scott Fitzgerald Gray | 158 |
| 6 | Lost Mines of Karak, The | Greg A. Vaughan with James Larrison | 159 |
| 7 | Den of the Destroyer | Rodney Thompson | 160 |
| 9 | Temple Between, The | Ari Marmell | 161 |
| 10 | Fist of Mourning | Robert J. Schwalb | 162 |
| 11 | Beyond the Mottled Tower | Creighton Broadhurst, Bruce R. Cordell & David Noonan | 163 |
| 12 | Haven of the Bitter Glass | Kevin Kulp | 164 |
| 14 | Alliance at Nefelus | Chris Tulach | 165 |
| 15 | Throne of the Stone-Skinned King | Logan Bonner | 166 |
| 17 | Garaitha's Anvil | Scott Fitzgerald Gray | 167 |
| 19 | Tyranny of Souls, A | Robert J. Schwalb | 168 |
| 21 | Betrayal at Monadhan | David Noonan | 170 |

**"Priestly Secrets" (Issue #71)**
**Written by W. Jason Peck**

Jason Peck revisits the town of Restenford, made famous in the classic L-series of adventures produced by TSR, Inc. "Priestly Secrets" weaves a haunting story about a stolen chalice, roving packs of half-starved rats, and ghoul-infested pirate catacombs. It's a perfect blend of intrigue and dungeon exploration, and it comes with a beautiful map of Restenford by illustrator Stephen Daniele.

**Writer Spotlight: Wolfgang Baur**

Today, Wolfgang Baur is best known in the RPG industry as the publisher of *Kobold Quarterly* magazine, but his history with periodicals (and D&D) traces all the way back to the early days of *Dungeon*. Wolf wrote a handful of adventures before joining TSR, Inc., as *Dungeon*'s associate editor. Three years later, he took the helm. Wolf has continued to write for *Dungeon* over the years, giving readers masterfully crafted and often very deadly adventures against memorable villains the likes of Agrovale the skeleton warrior, Doresain the Ghoul King, and the Black Shaman.

**"The Glass House" (Issue #15)**
**"The Ship of Night" (Issue #20)**
**"A Rose for Talakara" (Issue #25)**
**"The Whale" (Issue #35)**
**"The Fire Giant's Daughter" (Issue #39)**
**"Kingdom of the Ghouls" (Issue #70)**
**"Raiders of the Black Ice" (Issue #115)**
**"The Clockwork Fortress" (Issue #126)**
**"A Gathering of Winds" (Issue #129)**
**"Enemies of My Enemy" (Issue #149)**

**"The Forgotten Man" (Issue #75)**
**Written by Steve Devaney**

When the adventurers decide to help a man who has lost his memory, little do they realize he's Gethirah Kugothan, the notorious anti-paladin! Can the man

| Level | Adventure | Author(s) | Issue |
|---|---|---|---|
| 22 | Grasp of the Mantled Citadel | Creighton Broadhurst | 171 |
| 24 | Legacy of Io | Daniel Marthaler | 172 |
| 25 | Those Once Loyal | Robert J. Schwalb | 173 |
| 27 | Test of Fire | Scott Fitzgerald Gray | 174 |
| 30 | Last Breath of the Dragon Queen | David Noonan | 175 |

## Adventure Path: The Shackled City

| Level | Adventure | Author(s) | Issue |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Life's Bazaar | Christopher Perkins | 97 |
| 3 | Drakthar's Way | Christopher Perkins | * |
| 4 | Flood Season | James Jacobs | 98 |
| 6 | Zenith Trajectory | David Noonan | 102 |
| 8 | Demonskar Legacy, The | Tito Leati | 104 |
| 10 | Test of the Smoking Eye | David Noonan | 107 |
| 12 | Secrets of the Soul Pillars | Jesse Decker | 109 |
| 13 | Lords of Oblivion | Christopher Perkins | 111 |
| 15 | Foundation of Flame | Chris Thomasson | 113 |
| 16 | Thirteen Cages | Chris Thomasson | 114 |
| 18 | Strike on Shatterhorn | Christopher Perkins | 115 |
| 19 | Asylum | Christopher Perkins | 116 |

* Published in *The Shackled City* hardcover collected edition.

## Al-Qadim

| Level | Adventure | Author(s) | Issue |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1-4 | Last Oasis, The | Peter Aberg | 51 |
| 3-5 | Assassin Within, The | Paul F. Culotta | 47 |
| 3-7 | Rose of Jumlat, The | Jeroen Grasdyk | 57 |
| 5-7 | Blood & Fire | John Baichtal | 63 |
| 5-10 | Al-Kandîl | John Baichtal | 68 |

## Alternity: Dark•Matter

| Level | Adventure | Author(s) | Issue |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1-3 | Kindness of Strangers, The | Christopher Perkins | * |
| 2-6 | London Calling | Andy Collins | 83 |
| 3 | Head for Business, A | JD Wiker | 80 |

* Published in the *Dragon Annual* #4 (1999).

they know as "Michael" leave his evil past behind and become a champion of good? The answer lies in Gethirah's former stronghold, a magnificent castle perched atop a waterfall. This adventure passed through three editors and took nearly three years to see print, but everyone agrees it was well worth the wait.

**"Mertylmane's Road" (Issue #76)**
**Written by Jason Poole & Craig Zipse**

Wilderness adventures are among the hardest to write, but Jason and Craig blew the editors away with "Mertylmane's Road." The adventures are hired to clear a road that crosses a cold, monster-ridden expanse. The adventure concludes with an exploration of the Halls of Frost, a dungeon complex that serves as the abode of a bitter half-giant witch and her evil followers. Plus, it has dogsleds.

**Artist Spotlight: Stephen Daniele**

After Tony DiTerlizzi illustrated an entire issue of *Dungeon*, Stephen asked if we wanted to try that experiment again. Chris Perkins handed him the adventures for Issue #77, and Stephen went to work, turning over an entire issue's worth of art and maps. He also wrote a guest editorial for that issue. He even threw in a Map of Mystery! In all, Stephen has illustrated seven *Dungeon* covers:

**"Grave Circumstances" (Issue #56)**
**"Operation Manta Ray" (Issue #66)**
**"Eye of Myrkul" (Issue #73)**
**"Ex Keraptis Cum Amore" (Issue #77)**
**"The Harrowing" (Issue #84)**
**"The Seventh Arm" (Issue #88)**
**"Flood Season" (Issue #98)**

## Alternity: Star*Drive

| Level | Adventure | Author(s) | Issue |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1-3 | Convergence | Christopher Perkins | 68 |
| 6-8 | Deepstrike | James Wyatt | 78 |

## Birthright

| Level | Adventure | Author(s) | Issue |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2-4 | Seeking Bloodsilver | Christopher Perkins | 59 |

## Chaos Scar

| Level | Adventure | Author(s) | Issue |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Brothers Gray, The | Greg A. Vaughan | 172 |
| 1 | Chance Encounter, A | Robert J. Schwalb | 174 |
| 1 | Death in the Pincers | Rob Heinsoo | 172 |
| 1 | Den of the Slavetakers | Rob Heinsoo | 171 |
| 1 | Elves of the Valley | Robert J. Schwalb | 178 |
| 1 | Eyes in the Forest | Robert J. Schwalb | 177 |
| 1 | Lost Library, The | Peter Lee | 173 |
| 1 | Stick in the Mud | Aeryn "Blackdirge" Rudel | 171 |
| 1 | Tainted Spiral | Aeryn "Blackdirge" Rudel | 173 |
| 2 | Crossroads, The | Rodney Thompson | 176 |
| 2 | Dead by Dawn | Aeryn "Blackdirge" Rudel | 176 |
| 2 | Down the Goblin Hole | Gareth Hanrahan | 180 |
| 2 | Hammer Falls, The | Corwin Riddle | 179 |
| 2 | Shrine of Glass-Spire Forest, The | Cal Moore | 175 |
| 2 | Sliver's Call | Stephen Radney-MacFarland | 174 |
| 3 | Splintered Spring, The | Scott Fitzgerald Gray | 179 |
| 3 | Wayward Wyrmling, The | Aeryn "Blackdirge" Rudel | 182 |
| 4 | Crawling Fane | Aeryn "Blackdirge" Rudel | 178 |
| 4 | Glowstone Caverns | Jennifer Clarke Wilkes | 177 |
| 4 | Pillar of Eyes, The | Robert J. Schwalb | 180 |
| 4 | Vanguard Tower | Robert Wieland | 182 |
| 5 | Slaver's Stone, The | Robert J. Schwalb | 181 |
| 5-7 | Scarred for Life | Andrew G. Schneider | 192 |
| 6-8 | Radiant Morn, The | Daniel Marthaler | 183 |
| 7-9 | Reflections of Ruin | John Rossomangno | 196 |
| 7-9 | Rumble in the Valley | Dave Chalker | 193 |
| 7-9 | Scarblade | Sterling Hershey | 189 |

**"Cloudkill" (Issue #79)**
**Written by Jeff Fairbourn**

Pollution spewing from a mountaintop threatens the well-being of a sylph and her flying horses, and further investigation reveals a derro foundry deep within the mountain. Combining aerial adventuring with dungeon exploration, "Cloudkill" is both a cautionary tale about the dangers of pollution and an unbridled romp in the finest D&D tradition.

**"A Race Against Time" (Issue #81)**
**Written by Kent Ertman**

In a Side Trek titled "The Best Laid Plans" (Issue #79), the adventurers are hired to capture a wanted criminal named Bruiser Holloway. In "A Race Against Time," Bruiser's underlings attempt to break him out of prison, but not before planting explosive crystals throughout the city to keep the heroes and the local authorities distracted. Can the heroes save the city and prevent Bruiser's escape?

**Writer Spotlight: Tito Leati**

Proving to the editors that "Trial of the Frog" wasn't a fluke, Tito blew socks off with "Iriandel," a tale about a cursed unicorn whose horn was transformed into a spear and entombed with the remains of a barbarian lord. Not bad work for a native of Italy who speaks and writes English as a second language. When the time came to write the climactic finale of the *Age of Worms* Adventure Path, "Dawn of a New Age," the editors knew Tito alone could do it justice.

**"Trial of the Frog" (Issue #78)**
**"Iriandel" (Issue #83)**
**"The Shalm's Dark Song" (Issue #87)**
**"The Seventh Arm" (Issue #88)**
**"The Swarm" (Issue #92)**
**"The Demonskar Legacy" (Issue #104)**
**"Fiendish Footprints" (Issue #122)**
**"The Champion's Belt" (Issue #128)**

| Level | Adventure | Author(s) | Issue |
|---|---|---|---|
| 8-10 | Pit of Delirium | Jeff Morgenroth | 190 |
| 9-11 | Heart of the Scar | Aeryn "Blackdirge" Rudel | 197 |

## Council of Wyrms

| Level | Adventure | Author(s) | Issue |
|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | Sleeping Dragon | Bill Slavicsek | 48 |

## Dark Sun

| Level | Adventure | Author(s) | Issue |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Vault of Darom Madar, The** | Aeryn "Blackdirge" Rudel | 181 |
| 3-5 | Raiders of the Chanth | Randy Maxwell | 44 |
| 3-5 | Year of Priest's Defiance, The | Allen Varney & Rick Swan | 35 |
| 4 | Last Stand at Outpost Three* | David Noonan | 110 |
| 5-7 | Grave Circumstances | Bill Slavicsek | 56 |
| 5-7 | Revenge of the Marauders** | Bruce R. Cordell | 183 |
| 7-9 | Beneath the Dust** | Jared Espley | 187 |

* D&D v.3.5 adventure
** D&D v.4.0 adventure

## Dragonlance

| Level | Adventure | Author(s) | Issue |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2-4 | Under a Pale Moon | Jason Carl | 72 |
| 3-6 | Draven Deeps' Menace, The | Jeff Fairbourn | 40 |
| 4-7 | Mayhem at Midnight | Trae Stratton | 43 |
| 5-7 | Ice Tyrant, The | Christopher Perkins | 65 |
| 5 | Anvil of Time* | Tracy Raye Hickman | 86 |
| 6-10 | Unchained! | Bruce Norman | 22 |

* D&D v.3.0 adventure

## Eberron

| Level | Adventure | Author(s) | Issue |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Keep on the Shadowfell: Eberron Conversion* | Stephen Radney-MacFarland | 154 |
| 1 | Queen with Burning Eyes, The | James Wyatt | 113 |
| 4 | Fallen Angel | Keith Baker | 117 |

* D&D v.4.0 adventure

**"The Palace of Plenty" (Issue #130)**
**"Dawn of a New Age" (Issue #135)**
**"City of Broken Idols" (Issue #145)**

### Stray *Dungeon* Adventures

For four years in a row, TSR/Wizards produced a thirteenth issue of *Dragon* magazine called the *Dragon Magazine Annual*, and every one of them contained an exclusive *Dungeon* adventure: "Wyrmsmere," by Christopher Perkins (1996); the sequel, "Dragonwyr," by Christopher Perkins (1997); "Handle with Care," by Ron Poirier (1998); and a Dark•Matter adventure featuring swamp-dwelling moccasin men titled "The Kindness of Strangers," by Christopher Perkins (1999). The most hard-to-find adventure, however, has to be "The Dead of Winter," by Keith Francis Strohm, which appeared on a CD included with early printings of the 3rd Edition *Player's Handbook*.

### "The Harrowing" (Issue #84)
### Written by Monte Cook

This wonderful homage to *Queen of the Demonweb Pits* introduced *Dungeon* readers to Laveth, the daughter of Lolth, and included an extensive and harrowing foray into the Demonweb Pits. It also features an illustration booklet of player handouts, like those found in such classic adventures as *Tomb of Horrors* and *The Hidden Shrine of Tamoachan*.

### "Dungeon of the Fire Opal" (Issue #84)
### Written by Jonathan Tweet

Jonathan Tweet took the nameless dungeon that appeared in the original AD&D *Dungeon Master's Guide*, fleshed it out, threw in some appropriately terrifying low-level villains, and gave it a name. The end result is "Dungeon of the Fire Opal," an old-school

| Level | Adventure | Author(s) | Issue |
|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | Aundairian Job, The | Craig Shackleton | 147 |
| 5 | Chimes at Midnight | Nicolas Logue | 133 |
| 5 | Murder in Oakbridge | Uri Kurlianchik | 129 |
| 5 | Riding the Rail | Christopher Wissel | 143 |
| 6 | Crypt of Crimson Stars | Andy Collins & James Wyatt | 123 |
| 7 | City of Blood | Nicolas Logue | 154 |
| 7 | Heart of the Forbidden Forge* | Luke Johnson | 167 |
| 7 | Steel Shadows | Keith Baker | 115 |
| 7 | Temple of the Scorpion God | Andy Collins & James Wyatt | 124 |
| 8 | Pit of the Fire Lord | Andy Collins & James Wyatt | 125 |
| 8 | Quoth the Raven | Nicolas Logue | 150 |
| 10 | Hell's Heart | Nicolas Logue | 151 |
| 15 | Maze of Shattered Souls* | James Wyatt | 177 |

* D&D v.4.0 adventure

## Forgotten Realms

| Level | Adventure | Author(s) | Issue |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Keep on the Shadowfell: Forgotten Realms Conversion*** | Greg Bilsland | 154 |
| 1 | Raiders of Galath's Roost, The* | Skip Williams | 87 |
| 1 | Third of Purloined Vellum* | Graham Robert Scott | 88 |
| 1 | Within the Circle** | Sam Brown | 130 |
| 1-3 | . . . And a Dozen Eggs | Randy Maxwell | 30 |
| 1-3 | Beast Within, The | Paul Hamilton Beattie, Jr. | 65 |
| 1-3 | Into the Nest of Vipers | Matthew G. Adkins | 75 |
| 1-3 | Shards of Selûne*** | Andrew G. Schneider | 193 |
| 1-3 | Welcome to the Krypthome | Samuel Heath | 52 |
| 2 | Menace of the Icy Spire*** | Sean Molley | 159 |
| 2-4 | Frothing Miscreant, The | Robert A. Van Buskirk | 80 |
| 3-5 | Gauntlgrym Gambit, The*** | Daniel Marthaler | 193 |
| 3-5 | Slave Vats of the Yuan-ti | Jason Kuhl | 69 |
| 3-5 | That Which Never Sleeps*** | Daniel Marthaler | 195 |
| 3-5 | Witches' Brew | Steve Johnson | 67 |
| 3-6 | Oracle at Sumbar, The | Paul F. Culotta | 48 |
| 3-6 | Ssscaly Thingsss | Kent Ertman | 70 |
| 4 | Muster of Morach Tor, The** | Russell Brown | 144 |

* D&D v.3.0 adventure
** D&D v.3.5 adventure
*** D&D v.4.0 adventure

dungeon crawl based on Gary Gygax's evocative yet incomplete dungeon.

**"Ever-Changing Fortunes" (Issue #85)**
**Written by Peter Zollers**

When a kobold comes to town asking for help to save a bunch of dwarves, you know you're in for something a little different. "Ever-Changing Fortunes" is about a dwarven copper mine overrun by troglodytes and their sinister drow leader, but it's the details, the quirks, and the cool NPCs that make this adventure truly hit a vein.

**"Anvil of Time" (Issue #86)**
**Written by Tracy Raye Hickman**

When Tracy Hickman, coauthor of *The Dragonlance Chronicles* and the codesigner of such classic AD&D adventures as I3 *Pharaoh* and I6 *Ravenloft*, approached the editors with an idea for a Dragonlance adventure featuring time travel and set within a cool dungeon complex, well . . . who could resist such an awesome proposal? "Anvil of Time" gave Dragonlance fans exactly what they'd been clamoring for!

**Issue #87**
**Written by David Eckelberry, Tito Leati, Robert Lee, W. Jason Peck, Johnathan M. Richards, Mike Selinker, and Skip Williams**

Dungeon
Frontal Lands Ravaged By Dragon Kin
"I'm Carrying Tharizdun's Love Child!"
Bard's Tune Spells Doom For Travelers
Mad Ranger Goes Wild For Funky Fungus

Never has a single issue received such universal praise as Issue #87, which owes its success to all seven of its contributing writers. What's not to like? There's a fantastic Zhentarim fortress ("The Raiders of Galath's Roost"), a pregnant Tharizdun-worshiping villainess ("The Cradle of Madness"), evil half-dragons and frost giants riding mastodons ("Glacier Season"), a hilarious wilderness romp illustrated

| Level | Adventure | Author(s) | Issue |
|---|---|---|---|
| 4-6 | Huzza's Goblin o' War | Paul F. Culotta | 63 |
| 4-7 | Dreadful Vestiges | Steve Johnson | 71 |
| 4-8 | On Wings of Darkness | Craig Barrett | 34 |
| 5 | Forest of Blood** | Wil Upchurch | 103 |
| 5 | Hidden Destinies*** | Brian Cortijo | 175 |
| 5-7 | Five Deadly Shadows, The*** | Téos Abadia | 195 |
| 5-7 | Grimjaws | Jennifer Tittle Stack | 62 |
| 5-7 | Mistress of the Mere | Paul F. Culotta | 72 |
| 5-8 | Sleep of Ages | Eric L. Boyd | 69 |
| 5-8 | Training Ground | Rick Maffei | 67 |
| 6 | Door from Everywhere, The* | Roger E. Moore | 88 |
| 6-8 | Eye of Myrkul | Eric L. Boyd | 73 |
| 6-9 | Grotto of the Queen | Paul & Shari Culotta | 64 |
| 6-9 | Operation Manta Ray | Paul F. Culotta | 66 |
| 6-10 | Pipes of Doom, The | Kristofer Wade | 28 |
| 7 | Tears for Twilight Hollow* | Angel Leigh McCoy & Christopher Perkins | 90 |
| 7-9 | Steelheart | Paul F. Culotta | 53 |
| 7-12 | Storm Season | Paul F. Culotta | 61 |
| 8 | Woe to Mistledale** | Skip Williams | 100 |
| 9 | Practical Magic** | Jason Nelson | 113 |
| 9 | Requiem of the Shadow Serpent** | Anson Caralya | 139 |
| 10 | Twisted Night | Stefan Haff | 149 |
| 10-12 | Akriloth, The | Matthew G. Adkins | 79 |
| 13 | Blood of Malar** | Eric L. Boyd | 126 |
| 13 | Dungeon of the Crypt** | Eric L. Boyd | 127 |
| 13 | Monument of the Ancients*** | Brian R. James & Matt James | 170 |
| 13 | Prisoner of the Firebringer** | Richard Baker | 101 |
| 13 | Secrets of the Arch Wood** | Skip Williams | 121 |
| 14 | Fireplace Level, The** | Eric L. Boyd | 128 |
| 15 | Man Forever | Jason Nelson-Brown | 137 |
| 16 | Spiral Gate, The*** | Scott Fitzgerald Gray | 180 |
| 17 | Twisted Run, The** | Wil Upchurch | 129 |
| Any | Elminster's Back Door | Ed Greenwood | 30 |

* D&D v.3.0 adventure
** D&D v.3.5 adventure
*** D&D v.4.0 adventure

by Aaron Williams of *Nodwick* fame ("Valley of the Snails"), a mad tiefling piper ("The Shalm's Dark Song"), and two 1st-level bonus adventures on a CD ("Tinderbox" and "Gorgoldand's Gauntlet"). It also didn't hurt that the issue was as fat as a walrus.

**"Tears for Twilight Hollow" (Issue #90)**
**Written by Angel Leigh McCoy & Christopher Perkins**

As a village mourns the death of a beloved paladin, a cleric of Loviatar masking as a local priest worms her way into the villagers' hearts and revels in their suffering. "Tears for Twilight Hollow" is part murder mystery, part dungeon crawl, with an emotional story at its core and a host of truly despicable villains, deadly traps, and shocking discoveries.

**"Kambrinex's Machinations" (Issue #91)**
**Written by Robert Lee**

Kambranex the wizard achieves a bizarre form of immortality by melding with his technomagical tower. Protected by a sentient shield guardian, Kambranex has begun rounding up monsters and turning them into half-machines, and the adventurers are the only ones who can end the madness. This adventure features the half-machine monster template.

**"Shadow of the Spider Moon" (Issue #92)**
**Written by Andy Collins**

*Dungeon* and *Polyhedron* merged into one magazine starting with Issue #90 and ending with Issue #108. The experiment received a mixed response. While *Dungeon* continued to focus on D&D adventures, *Polyhedron* presented a number of stand-alone mini-games and campaign settings, including a 3rd Edition

## Freeport

| Level | Adventure | Author(s) | Issue |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Dead Man's Quest | Graeme Davis | 107 |

## Greyhawk

| Level | Adventure | Author(s) | Issue |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Alterations | Philip Athans | 83 |
| 1 | Funeral Procession** | Mark A. Hart | 135 |
| 1 | Mad God's Key** | Jason Bulmahn | 114 |
| 2 | Deep Freeze* | Cameron Widen | 83 |
| 2-4 | Priestly Secrets | W. Jason Peck | 71 |
| 3 | Raiders of the Black Ice** | Wolfgang Baur | 115 |
| 3-5 | Serenade Before Supper, A | Andrew Veen | 53 |
| 4 | Ill-Made Graves** | Kevin Carter | 133 |
| 5-7 | Setting Sun, The | Andy Miller | 73 |
| 6 | Cradle of Madness, The** | Robert Lee | 87 |
| 6 | Racing the Snake** | John Simcoe | 105 |
| 6 | Tammeraut's Fate** | Greg A. Vaughan | 106 |
| 6-10 | House of the Brothers | Mark R. Shipley | 6 |
| 8 | Clockwork Fortress, The** | Wolfgang Baur | 126 |
| 8 | Vile Addiction** | Tom Ganz, B. Matthew Conklin III, Stefan Happ, Stephen S. Greer and Ashavan Doyon | 145 |
| 8-12 | Ex Keraptis Cum Amore (From Keraptis with Love) | Andy Miller | 77 |
| 9 | Shadows of Spinecastle** | Stephen S. Greer & Gary Holian | 148 |
| 9 | Kambranex's Machinations* | Robert Lee | 91 |
| 9 | Lord of the Scarlet Tide* | James Jacobs | 85 |
| 9 | Spawn of Sehan** | Tom Ganz, B. Matthew Conklin III, Stefan Happ, Stephen S. Greer and Ashavan Doyon | 146 |
| 9-15 | Kingdom of the Ghouls | Wolfgang Baur | 70 |
| 10 | Coming Storm, The** | Greg A. Vaughan | 136 |
| 10 | Dread Pagoda of the Inscrutable Ones** | Tom Ganz, B. Matthew Conklin III, Stefan Happ, Stephen S. Greer and Ashavan Doyon | 147 |
| 11 | Shadows of the Abyss** | Greg A. Vaughan | 118 |
| 11 | Touch of the Abyss** | Greg A. Vaughan | 117 |
| 12 | Hateful Legacy, The** | Grag A. Vaughan | 131 |
| 12 | Headless** | James Jacobs | 89 |

* D&D v.3.0 adventure

** D&D v.3.5 adventure

D&D revision of the AD&D Spelljammer setting. "Shadow of the Spider Moon," which featured space-faring drow and included character creation rules, equipment, several new spelljamming vessels, and a fleshed-out adventure setting. It was one of the few mini-games that used the D&D rules as a foundation. It focuses on what's cool about the setting and jettisons the sillier elements that crept into Spelljammer over the years. As Erik Mona writes in his Issue #92 editorial, "Gone are the goofy hippo men. Gone is the wonky cosmology. And best of all, there's nary a giant space hamster to be found."

**Adventure Path: *The Shackled City***
**Written by Jesse Decker, James Jacobs, Tito Leati, David Noonan, Christopher Perkins, Chris Thomasson**

Concocted by *Dungeon* editor Chris Thomasson and finalized by Erik Mona and James Jacobs, *The Shackled City* takes place in and around the city of Cauldron, located in the caldera of a dormant volcano. Why would anyone build a city inside a volcano, you ask? Well, that's part of the mystery. Presented in *Dungeon* as a series of eleven adventures and later compiled into a hardcover book (with a bonus twelfth adventure), *The Shackled City* pitted heroes against the fiendish Cagewrights, a power-thirsty covenant of evil-minded criminals, and their mad demon lord, the two-faced Adimarchus.

**Common Ground: Shelter from the Storm**

Many adventures begin with the heroes seeking shelter from a storm. Having escaped the imminent threat of the storm, they quickly find themselves embroiled in the plot. Adventures that have used this tried-and-true setup include "Jacob's Well" (Issue

| Level | Adventure | Author(s) | Issue |
|---|---|---|---|
| 12 | Maure Castle** | Robert J. Kuntz & Gary Gygax with Erik Mona & James Jacobs | 112 |
| 12 | Wrath of the Abyss** | Greg A. Vaughan | 119 |
| 14 | Lost Temple of Demogorgon** | Sean K Reynolds | 120 |
| 14 | Quadripartite* | Peter Aperlo | 99 |
| 14 | Throne of Iuz** | John Simcoe | 118 |
| 15 | Chambers of Antiquities** | Robert J. Kuntz | 124 |
| 17 | Greater Halls, The** | Robert J. Kuntz | 139 |
| 20 | Heart of Hellfire Mountain, The** | Dave Olson | 140 |
| 21 | Storm Lord's Keep, The* | James Wyatt | 93 |

* D&D v.3.0 adventure

** D&D v.3.5 adventure

## Marvel Super Heroes

| | Adventure | Author(s) | Issue |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Hellfire Hostages | Allen Varney | 25 |
| | How Do You Stop the Rhino from Charging? | Steven "Stan!" Brown | 71 |

## Oriental Adventures

| Level | Adventure | Author(s) | Issue |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Honor and Eta* | Dave Zenz | 89 |
| 2-4 | Golden Bowl of Ashu H'san, The | Rick Swan | 9 |
| 2-5 | Kappa of Pachee Bridge, The | Jay Batista | 5 |
| 2-7 | Dragon's Gift, The | Thomas M. Kane | 15 |
| 3-5 | Artisan's Tomb, The | Matthew Maaske | 10 |
| 3-5 | Samurai Steel | Daniel Salas | 7 |
| 4-6 | Crocodile Tears | Marcus Rowland | 18 |
| 4-8 | Bride for a Fox | Craig Barrett | 27 |
| 5-6 | Waiting Room of Yen-Wang-Yeh | Greg Kramer | 17 |
| 5-8 | Flowers of Flame, The | Jay Batista | 8 |
| 7-10 | Mad Gyoji | Colin Sullivan | 33 |
| 10 | Palace of Plenty, The** | Tito Leati | 130 |

* D&D v.3.0 adventure

** D&D v.3.5 adventure

#43), "Spirits of the Tempest" (Issue #52), "Unhallowed Ground" (Issue #54), "Bogged Down" (Issue #91), "Beyond the Light of Reason" (Issue #96), "Torrents of Dread" (Issue #114), and "The Last Breaths of Ashenport" (Issues #152 and #156).

**Artist Spotlight: Christopher West**

Christopher West was the cartographer for *The Shackled City* Adventure Path and provided *Dungeon* with numerous Maps of Mystery—stand-alone maps around which readers could build their own adventures. Two of his best, the Githzerai Monastery and the Temple of Boccob, appeared in Issue #99. Chris also wrote an adventure for *Dungeon* featuring a disgruntled imp ("Unfamiliar Ground" in Issue #119) for which, naturally, he drew the maps.

**Issue #100**
**Written by Peter Adkison, Richard Baker, Andy Collins, Monte Cook, Michael Kortes, Christopher Perkins, Jonathan Tweet, Skip Williams, and James Wyatt**

This landmark issue, arguably *Dungeon*'s best, contains adventures and articles by some of the biggest names in the roleplaying game industry and features several classic D&D villains, including the Zhentarim, the githyanki lich-queen Vlaakith, and the red dragon Flame. Issue #100 also included a gem from first-time contributor Michael Kortes called "Beast of Burden," an adventure that takes place amid an assembly of armored howdahs saddled on the back of a colossal extraplanar dinosaur called the Kadtanach.

**"Prison of the Firebringer" (Issue #101)**
**Written by Richard Baker**

The two-headed slaad lord Bazim-Gorag is one of *Dungeon*'s most formidable and

## Planescape

| Level | Adventure | Author(s) | Issue |
|---|---|---|---|
| 6-9 | Umbra | Christopher Perkins | 55 |
| 7-12 | Nemesis | Christopher Perkins | 60 |

## Ravenloft

| Level | Adventure | Author(s) | Issue |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2-4 | Horror's Harvest | Christopher Perkins | 38 |
| 3-7 | Baron's Eyrie, The | Jason Kuhl | 58 |
| 4-6 | House on the Edge of Midnight | Raymond E. Dyer | 76 |
| 4-6 | Jigsaw | Dan De Fazio & Christina A. Stiles | 61 |
| 4-6 | Last Dance | Jeff Crook | 64 |
| 4-6 | Price of Revenge, The | Steve Kurtz | 42 |
| 4-6 | Sea Wolf, The | Lisa Smedman | 55 |
| 5-9 | Laughing Man | Paul F. Culotta | 52 |
| 6-9 | Bane of the Shadowborn | William W. Connors | 31 |
| 6-9 | Felkovic's Cat | Paul F. Culotta | 50 |

## Ravenloft: Masque of the Red Death

| Level | Adventure | Author(s) | Issue |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Falls Run | James Wyatt | 67 |
| 5-7 | Dark Magic in New Orleans | Randy Richards | 71 |

## Spelljammer

| Level | Adventure | Author(s) | Issue |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2-4 | Gnome Droppings | Christopher Perkins | 63 |
| 4-8 | Visitors from Above | Shonn Everett | 28 |
| 5-9 | Flowfire | Steve Kurtz | 39 |
| 6-8 | Artist's Errand, An | Steve Kurtz | 45 |
| 7-9 | Sea of Sorrow, The | Steve Kurtz | 36 |
| 8-10 | Mammoth Problems | Lawrence Kapture | 41 |
| Any | Jammin' | James M. Ward | 21 |

## Top Secret/S.I.

| | Adventure | Author(s) | Issue |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Operation: Fire Sale | John Terra | 26 |

memorable villains. In "Prison of the Firebringer," the heroes uncover a plot to free the slaad lord. Rich Baker presents a perfect blend of wilderness and dungeon exploration and a deadly array of adversaries, leading to a finale that will have players on the edge of their seats.

**Common Ground: 'Tis the Season**

How many adventures has *Dungeon* published with the word "Season" in the title? Answer: four. There's "Storm Season" (Issue #61), "Glacier Season" (Issue #87), "Flood Season" (Issue #98), and "Witching Season" (Issue #153). As for the seasons themselves, winter seems the most popular, with "One Winter's Night" (Issue #68), "The Winter Tapestry" (Issue #78), "Winter of the Witch" (Issue #162), and "The Dead of Winter" (*Player's Handbook* v.3.0 CD-ROM).

**"The Chasm Bridge" (Issue #101)**
**Written by Desmond R. Varady**

"The Chasm Bridge" was finagled from *Dungeon* early on and published in *Dragon* #131 to help promote the newborn publication. Designed for the 1st Edition AD&D game, the adventure was updated to 3rd Edition and rereleased. In the adventure, the heroes must navigate an Underdark chasm guarded a crippled wizard and his monstrous allies. Sometimes the simplest ideas are the most fun.

**"Critical Threats: Warduke" (Issue #105)**
**Written by the *Dungeon* staff**

Warduke, the evil warrior whom former *Dungeon* editor Erik Mona refers to as "the Boba Fett of the D&D toy line," finally gets his due! Not only does this chaotic evil badass appear as a Critical Threat (statted up as an 18th-level fighter), but he's immortalized on the cover by the Boba Fett of illustrators, Wayne Reynolds.

# Non-Adventures

In Issue #68, *Dungeon* intrtoduced its first "non-adventure" offering: a Map of Mystery. Additional standalone maps appeared in future issues, and their popularity led to the addition of other non-adventure features, all of which are indexed below.

## Backdrop Articles

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| Alhaster | Richard Pett | 131 |
| Beasts of the Scarlet Brotherhood | Paul Looby & Stuart Kerrigan | 106 |
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| Daggerdale | Eric Menge | 192 |
| Dark Sun DM's Guide | David Noonan | 110 |
| Dark Sun Monsters: Part One | David Noonan | 110 |
| Dark Sun Monsters: Part Two | David Noonan | 111 |
| Denizens of the Bright Desert | Creighton Broadhurst | 103 |
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| Diyun | Will Hindmarch | 189 |
| Exag: City of Clay | Tom Ganz, B. Matthew Conklin III, Stefan Happ, Stephen S. Greer and Ashavan Doyon | 145 |
| Farshore: City of Hope | Stephen S. Greer & Gary Holian | 143 |
| Free City, The | Richard Pett | 128 |
| Hardby: City of the Scorned | Paul Looby | 109 |
| Into the Bright Desert | Creighton Broadhurst | 98 |
| Isle of Dread | Gary Holian | 114 |
| Istivin: City of Shadows | Greg A. Vaughan & Erik Mona | 117 |
| Mistwatch | Robert J. Schwalb | 186 |
| Moonshae Isles | Shawn Merwin | 196 |
| Necropolis of the Sword | Bruce R. Cordell | 191 |
| Paladins of Greyhawk | Gary Holian | 104 |
| Red Shoals of Dkar | Bruce R. Cordell | 174 |
| Ring of Storms, The | Keith Baker | 122 |
| Sasserine | James Jacobs | 139 |
| Scuttlecove: City of Chaos | James Jacobs | 146 |
| Skullport | Matt Goetz | 200 |
| Suzail | Eric Menge | 198 |
| Valor Is Our Blood! | Rick Larue | 113 |
| Xiousing | Dan Anderson | 195 |

**"Tammeraut's Fate" (Issue #106)**
**Written by Greg A. Vaughan**

It begins with the heroes stumbling upon three harpies devouring a corpse, with clues pointing to a besieged hermitage on Firewatch Island. There the adventures defend the hermitage against the undead crew of the sunken warship Tammeraut, but the true threat lurks in the depths of Dagon's Maw, an underwater rift near the sunken wreck. Like any good horror story, "Tammeraut's Fate" plays up the eerie atmosphere and delivers real chills.

**Writer Spotlight: Greg A. Vaughan**

Greg Vaughan stormed onto the scene with "Tammeraut's Fate" and established himself as the go-to guy for awesome adventures set in the *World of Greyhawk* campaign setting. Not only did he write an amazing trilogy of adventures chronicling an Abyssal attack on the city of Istivin (in Issues #117-119) but he also ended the *Savage Tide* Adventure Path by delivering an epic showdown against Demogorgon, the Prince of Demons!

**"Tammeraut's Fate" (Issue #106)**
**"Torrents of Dread" (Issue #114)**
**"Touch of the Abyss" (Issue #117)**
**"Shadows of the Abyss" (Issue #118)**
**"Wrath of the Abyss" (Issue #119)**
**"The Hateful Legacy" (Issue #131)**
**"Kings of the Rift" (Issue #133)**
**"The Coming Storm" (Issue #136)**
**"Prince of Demons" (Issue #150)**
**"The Plague Tree" (Issue #152)**
**"The Lost Mines of Karak" (Issue #159)**
**"The Brothers Gray" (Issue #172)**

**"Test of the Smoking Eye" (Issue #107)**
**Written by David Noonan**

What if one of the adventurers became a Demon Prince of the Abyss? David Noonan tackles this unsettling notion in "Test of the Smoking Eye" and also

# Bestiary Articles

| | Article | Author(s) | Issue |
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| | Dark Sun Threats | Bruce R. Cordell | 187 |
| | Flowers in the Darkness | Tim Eagon | 195 |
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| | Monsters of Mythology | Bruce R. Cordell | 178 |

# Campaign Workbook: Critical Threats/ Agents & Allies

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| 3 | Lord Flame | Chris Thomasson | 92 |
| 5 | Countess Vita Al-Adora | Ashavan Doyon | 136 |
| 6 | Keershaz the Imp | Mike Mearls | 95 |
| 7 | Sadie | Christopher Perkins | 93 |
| 8 | Dusklight Caravan, The | Sam Brown | 137 |
| 9 | Derthan Kaderas | Monte Cook | 100 |
| 9 | Hungash | Jonathan Tweet | 100 |
| 10 | Girddrez | F. Wesley Schneider | 126 |
| 10 | Nakhti | Bruce R. Cordell | 94 |
| 10 | Yu'thiol Mansecho | Matthew Sernett | 95 |
| 10 | Master Thest | Richard Baker | 100 |
| 11 | Downer Tarantula | Kyle Hunter | 138 |
| 11 | Oblivion | Chris Thomasson | 90 |
| 11 | Lord of Blades, The | Keith Baker, Bill Slavicsek & Christopher Perkins | 111 |
| 12 | Volkag | James Wilber | 106 |
| 13 | Malek | Mike McArtor, F. Wesley Schneider & James Lafond Sutter | 129 |
| 14 | Larsa Essinel | F. Wesley Schneider | 118 |
| 14 | Lone Tooth | Peter Adkison | 100 |
| 14 | Ella Mornel | Christopher Wissel | 132 |
| 15 | Lassiviren the Dark | Robert J. Schwalb | 114 |
| 15 | Bargle the Infamous | Mike McArtor | 144 |
| 15 | Dantalion | Erik Mona & James Jacobs | 106 |
| 16 | The Marshal | Christopher Wissel | 133 |
| 16 | Gnarlcrown | Matthew Sernett | 91 |
| 16 | Phyx | Seth Spencer | 99 |
| 16 | Evard | Erik Mona & James Jacobs | 107 |
| 19 | Larnyth | Christopher Perkins | 94 |

delivers one of the most memorable villains in Dungeon's history, Kaurophon the half-fiend, who comes to the heroes as a friend, urging them to seize control of a layer of the Abyss that used to be part of Celestia. However, his intentions are far from noble.

**"The Devil Box" (Issue #109)**
**Written by Richard Pett**

Richard Pett brings some humor to the magazine with "The Devil Box," in which the heroes help a pair of kobolds rescue one of their kin posing as "the Reptile Boy" in a traveling freak show. Along the way, they run afoul of the freak show owner, Horatio Quigley, and come to blows with a pack of wererats, a trio of imps, and a doll-sized chain devil.

**"Maure Castle" (Issue #112)**
**Written by Robert J. Kuntz & Gary Gygax**
**Additional Material by Erik Mona & James Jacobs**

The dungeon under ruined Maure Castle first appeared in WG5 *Mordenkainen's Fantastic Adventure*, the classic TSR adventure. Issue #112 presents a 3rd Edition refresh of this classic dungeon in its entirety, complete with new threats. Iconic foes such as the Terrible Iron Golem, Kerzit the demon, and the *eeeevil* Eli Tomorast also make triumphant returns.

**Writer Spotlight: David Noonan**

While working as a game designer at Wizards of the Coast, Dave Noonan found time to contribute several adventures to *Dungeon* magazine, including

| Level | Article | Author(s) | Issue |
|---|---|---|---|
| 19 | Xollox | Robert Harris | 97 |
| 20 | Fiend-Sage, The | Sean K Reynolds | 150 |
| 20 | Warduke | Erik Mona & James Jacobs | 105 |
| 21 | Demodragon | Mike McArtor | 147 |
| Any | Glimmerpane | Hal MacLean | 127 |
| Any | Cold Storage | Chris Thomasson | 96 |
| Any | Colossal Crypt | Scott Peterson | 99 |
| Any | Vortex, The | Christopher West | 91 |

## Campaign Workbook: The Cast

| | Article | Author(s) | Issue |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Alert the Watch! | F. Wesley Schneider | 118 |
| | Atypical Enemies | Chris Sims | 122 |
| | Bandit Gangs | Russell Brown | 146 |
| | Behind Bars | Michael Kortes | 130 |
| | Bounty Hunters | F. Wesley Schneider | 120 |
| | Company of Thieves | Ashavan Doyon | 136 |
| | Courtesans and Confidants | F. Wesley Schneider | 134 |
| | Down at the Docks | Russell Brown | 132 |
| | Employers and Patrons | Alec Austin | 121 |
| | Fences and Dealers | Frank Brunner | 115 |
| | Five-Second NPCs | Mike Mearls | 117 |
| | Healing for Hire | James L. Sutter | 139 |
| | Informants | Russell Brown | 116 |
| | Kaius Dantus | Peter Schaefer | 177 |
| | Sages and Scholars | Alec Austin | 123 |
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| | Slum Dwellers | Phillip Larwood | 141 |
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| | Strictly Legit | Hal MacLean | 138 |
| | Trust No One | Kennon Bauman | 127 |
| | Wet Your Whistle | Ashavan Doyon | 128 |

## Campaign Workbook: The City

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| | 100 Market Stalls | Richard Pett | 123 |
| | 100 Shops and Taverns | Russell Brown | 147 |

contributions to *The Shackled City* and *Scales of War* Adventure Paths. But many consider his Dark Sun adventure, "Last Stand at Outpost Three," and an accompanying "Dark Sun DM's Guide" (both in Issue #110) his most inspired work. Together they gave everything a DM needed to run a 3rd Edition Dark Sun campaign. Dave's fondness for psionics would also surface in such classic *Dungeon* adventures as "Interlopers of Ruun-Khazai" and "Spiral of Manzessine."

**"Interlopers of Ruun-Khazai" (Issue #92)**
**"Spiral of Manzessine" (Issue #94)**
**"Zenith Trajectory" (Issue #102)**
**"Test of the Smoking Eye" (Issue #107)**
**"Last Stand at Outpost Three" (Issue #110)**
**"Teleport Gone Awry" (Issue #152)**
**"Caravan of Glauu the Seer" (Issue #153)**
**"Rescue at Rivenroar" (Issue #156)**
**"The Ziggurat Beyond Time" (Issue #159)**
**"Beyond the Mottled Tower" (Issue #163)**
**"Betrayal at Monadhan" (Issue #170)**
**"The Last Breath of the Dragon Queen" (Issue #175)**

**"Practical Magic" (Issue #113)**
**Written by Jason Nelson**

The disappearance of a Sembian wizard causes uproar in the Cormyrean port city of Marsember. All clues leads to a local necromancer who praises the usefulness of undead servants but craves the company of a living peer in whom he can confide. "Practical Magic" not only delivers a host of remarkable and complex NPCs but also strikes a nice balance of exploration, roleplaying, and combat encounters.

**"Steel Shadows" (Issue #115)**
**Written by Keith Baker**

Someone is killing and dismembering warforged in the city of Sharn, and some attribute the murders to a phantom known as Jack-of-Irons. However, the

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|---|---|---|
| 100 Things Found in an Inn | Jason Bulmahn | 138 |
| 50 Unexpected Events | Richard Pett | 134 |
| A Town in the Aftermath | Mark A. Hart | 122 |
| Abandoned Buildings | Dawn Ibach | 116 |
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| Fifty Fairs and Markets | Richard Pett | 115 |
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| Ordeals of Mettle | Tim Hitchcock | 140 |
| Smells of the City | Alec Austi | 124 |
| Stronghold Defenses | Stefan Happ | 135 |
| The Adventure Begins | Russell Brown | 120 |
| To the Games! | Richard Pett | 132 |
| Unsung Heroes | Russell Brown | 121 |

## Campaign Workbook: The Dungeon

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| 100 Bookshelves | F. Wesley Schneider | 135 |
| 100 Even Less Useful Items | Richard Pett | 142 |
| 100 Useless Items | Richard Pett | 121 |
| 100 Wizardly Knick-Knacks | Lawrence Kapture | 140 |
| 7 Treasure Chests | Mark A. Hart | 134 |
| A Brief Respite | Rodney Thompson | 117 |
| Art and Other Fancy Loot | Wolfgang Baur | 118 |
| Beakers of Endless Potions | Matthew Goodall | 125 |
| Black Sheep | Nicolas Logue | 129 |
| Chutes and Ladders | Tim Hitchcock | 131 |
| Dungeons with Dimension | Alec Austin | 120 |
| Essential Works | Hal MacLean | 122 |
| Familiar Creatures with New Faces | Christopher Wissel | 129 |
| Four Fiendish Fountains | Frank Brunner | 116 |

true culprit is far more disturbing. "Steel Shadows" presents a host of suspects and surprising twists, and also tackles some of the underlying themes of the Eberron campaign setting, including racial bigotry and the consequences of war.

**"The 30 Greatest D&D Adventures of All Time" (Issue #116)**
**Written by Erik Mona & James Jacobs**

Erik and James summoned a panel of D&D industry experts and asked them to select and rank the best D&D adventures ever published. Adventure aficionados around the world compared this amazing list to their own. A sidebar in the same article also singles out the ten most recommended *Dungeon* adventures written up to that point.

**"Throne of Iuz" (Issue #118)**
**Written by John Simcoe**

Deep in the Vesve Forest lurks an orc tribe ruled by King Bog One-eye, a colossal toad awakened by the demigod Iuz. Why the orcs would kneel before such a creature is a mystery begging to be solved, and John Simcoe presents many clever and unique challenges as well as a memorable adventure location leading to the final confrontation with Iuz's mighty servant.

**World of Greyhawk Poster Maps (Issues #118-121)**
**Cartography by Rob Lazzaretti**

*Dungeon* published a series of four foldout poster maps which, in terms of style and content, harken back to the original maps that appeared in the earliest *World of Greyhawk* gazetteers and boxed sets. However, new details have been added, including various towns and ruins featured in game supplements

| Article | Author(s) | Issue |
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| Godtrap, The | F. Wesley Schneider | 150 |
| Grisly Ends | Hal MacLean | 137 |
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| Resting on the Run | Chris Fry | 124 |
| Sounds of the Underworld | Russell Brown | 119 |
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## Campaign Workbook: The Journey

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| 100 Meals | Russell Brown | 133 |
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| Hazards of the Trail | Richard Pett | 122 |
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| Law of the Land | Russell Brown | 123 |
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| Swamp Dangers | Jason Bulmahn | 126 |
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| Unwanted Followers | Russell Brown | 134 |

and adventures over the years, making these maps a must-own for all Greyhawk fans.

**Artist Spotlight: Wayne Reynolds**

Few artists can capture dynamic action scenes better than Wayne Reynolds, who tackled many of *Dungeon*'s more difficult subjects, including Vlaakith the githyanki lich-queen, the demon lord Graz'zt, the elder evil Kyuss, Maure Castle's resident wizard Eli Tomorast, and everyone's favorite two-headed monkey-demon, Demogorgon. His work also adorns the covers of Issues #114 and #143 but doesn't speak directly to those issues' contents.

**"Spiral of Manzessine" (Issue #94)**
**"The Lich-Queen's Beloved" (Issue #100)**
**"Warduke" (Issue #105)**
**"Maure Castle" (Issue #112)**
**"Wrath of the Abyss" (Issue #119)**
**"Fiend's Embrace" (Issue #121)**
**"The Whispering Cairn" (Issue #124)**
**"Dawn of a New Age" (Issue #135)**
**"The Mud Sorcerer's Tomb" (Issue #138)**
**"Prince of Demons" (Issue #150)**
**"Rescue at Rivenroar" (Issue #156)**
**"The Lost Mines of Karak" (Issue #159)**
**"Winter of the Witch" (Issue #162)**
**"Revenge of the Marauders" (Issue #183)**

**"Wrath of the Abyss" (Issues #119)**
**Written by Greg A. Vaughan**

To save the Marquis of Istivin, the heroes must do battle with the depraved remnants of a drow house in the Underdark and confront the Malgoth, a greater evil that lurks within Istivin itself. Greg A. Vaughan wraps up his three-part adventure series in spectacular fashion—with a battle in the streets against a fearsome monstrosity unlike anything seen in the pages of *Dungeon* magazine before.

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| 18 | Living Shipwreck | Richard Pett | 141 |

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## Court of Stars

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## Creature Incarnations

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| | Hordelings | Tim Eagon | 197 |
| | Living Spells | Peter Lee | 175 |
| | Modrons | Greg Bilsland & Bruce R. Cordell | 186 |
| | They Creep! | Scott Gable | 191 |

**"The Styes" (Issue #121)**
**Written by Richard Pett**

"The Styes" draws the curtain on a dismal port district where murder and mayhem are all too commonplace. The execution of a hapless fisherman believed to be a local serial killer known as the Lantern Man does little to quell fears that something terrible still lurks beneath the scummy surface of the Styes, and as the heroes investigate, they unearth horrors that words can barely begin to describe. So popular was this adventure with *Dungeon* readers that it spawned an equally grisly sequel ("The Weavers" in Issue #138).

**Writer Spotlight: Richard Pett**

Richard Pett's adventures run the gamut from whimsical ("The Devil Box") to creepy ("The Styes"). But one thing his adventures have in common is an immersive setting that draws you in, with well-rounded NPCs who have dark secrets. Every one of Richard's adventures is layered with intrigue that bites into you and holds on tight.

**"Hollow Threats" (Issue #96)**
**"The Devil Box" (Issue #109)**
**"The Styes" (Issue #121)**
**"The Prince of Redhand" (Issue #131)**
**"The Weavers" (Issue #138)**
**"The Sea Wyvern's Wake" (Issue #141)**
**"Serpents of Scuttlecove" (Issue #146)**

**"Secrets of the Arch Wood" (Issue #121)**
**Written by Skip Williams**

Skip Williams returns to his favorite stomping grounds, the Dales, with an adventure that pits heroes against the scion of a ruined elven house who favors drow over her elf kin. One of the highlights

## d20 Modern

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## Domains of Dread

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## Ecologies

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## Expeditionary Dispatches

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| Guardians of the Labyrinth | James Wyatt | 172 |

of "Secrets of the Arch Wood" is Quamara's sprawling treehouse lair and the deadly draegloth-haunted dungeon beneath its roots. For fans of the Forgotten Realms, it's a fiendish treat!

**"Quicksilver Hourglass" (Issue #123)**
**Written by Anson Caralya**

It's hard to challenge epic heroes, and thus epic-level adventures are a rare treat. In "Quicksilver Hourglass," mighty heroes must stop a covenant of powerful undead beings known as the Union of Eclipses from releasing a trapped god who has the power to slay every living creature in the multiverse. If that weren't daunting enough, the heroes must then confront and destroy the god in his timeless prison.

**Adventure Path: *The Age of Worms***
**Written by Wolfgang Baur, Jason Bulmahn, Jesse Decker, James Jacobs, Tito Leati, Nicolas Logue, Mike Mearls, Erik Mona, Richard Pett, Sean K Reynolds, and Greg A. Vaughan**

On the heels of *The Shackled City* Adventure Path comes the Age of Worms, an era of darkness, decay, and writhing doom brought to grisly life as a series of twelve outstanding adventures (appearing in Issues #124–135). As Oerth braces for the return of Kyuss the Wormgod, various factions begin to exert their dominance, leading heroes into conflict with awesome villains the likes of Balabar Smenk and Dragotha the dracolich. As one would expect, the series culminates in an epic confrontation with the Wyrmgod himself. Buttressing the Adventure Path is a series of articles, beginning with a Backdrop article in Issue #124 by Erik Mona detailing the mining town of Diamond Lake, where all the madness begins.

## Eye on Dark Sun

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| Taer Syraen, the Winter Citadel | Keith Baker | 196 |

## Eye on the Realms

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| Deadly Civic Honor, A | Ed Greenwood | 189 |
| Dracohar, The | Ed Greenwood | 182 |
| Flame Door, The | Ed Greenwood | 173 |

**"The Clockwork Fortress" (Issue #126)**
**Written by Wolfgang Baur**

In "The Clockwork Fortress," adventurers are contacted by a clockwork man who needs their help to reclaim a fortress crafted by an ancient and advanced people, a fortress now tainted by chaos and under derro control. Set in the Archbarony of Blackmoor, this adventure takes the heroes into a fortress unlike any other and pits them against some unusual clockwork constructs.

**Common Ground: T-Rex Covers**

Given all the monsters and antagonists that exist in the D&D game, the odds of a particular villain or monster appearing more than once on a *Dungeon* cover are slim. However, one subject that has reared its head three times is Tyrannosaurus Rex, which graces the covers of Issue #13 (by Fred Fields), Issue #123 (by Howard Lyon), and Issue #139 (by Dan Scott). Could it be the same dinosaur in all three paintings?

**"Dungeon of the Crypt" (Issue #127)**
**Written by Eric L. Boyd**

Undermountain isn't the only dungeon of renown below Waterdeep. The Dungeon of the Crypt, long claimed by the vampire Artor Morlin, waits to be explored. "Dungeon of the Crypt" is the second part of Eric Boyd's *Vampires of Waterdeep* adventure trilogy (Issues #125–127) but stands well on its own as a classic dungeon crawl, full of deadly monsters and traps.

**"Kings of the Rift" (Issue #133)**
**Written by Greg A. Vaughan**

As the *Age of Worms* draws nigh, adventurers explore a rift in search of the long-lost phylactery of Dragotha the dracolich. An assault on the Citadel of Weeping Dragons leads to skirmishes against giants, dragons, and other monstrosities. "Kings of the Rift" is a spectacular orgy of violence climaxing in a deadly

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| Explore Airspur: Villains and Vagabonds | Matt James | 172 |
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| Explore Fairhaven: Agents and Enemies | Chris Sims | 173 |
| Explore Fairhaven: Villains and Vagabonds | Jeff LaSala | 175 |

fight against Brazzemal the red dragon—a nod to the classic *Against the Giants* adventure.

**"Home Under the Range" (Issue #134)**
**Written by Michael Kortes**

When tieflings threaten a dwarven excavation, the dwarves turn to an unlikely source for salvation. If the adventurers can escort a herd of giant glowing beetles—yep, beetles—to the excavation site, the dwarves can use the beetles' light to counter the tieflings' darkness magic. Forget the flying shark; any adventure that features a sentient, talking rope as the major villain deserves special mention.

**Adventure Path: *Savage Tide***
**Written by Wolfgang Baur, Jason Bulmahn, Eric L. Boyd, Gary Holian, James Jacobs, Nicolas Logue, Richard Pett, Stephen S. Greer, Tito Leati, Sean K Reynolds, F. Wesley Schneider, James Sutter, and Greg A. Vaughan**

The *Savage Tide* consisted of twelve adventures published in Issues #139–150. The series documents the return of the savage tide, an event that long ago swept over an ancient civilization, transforming the citizens of a proud city into slavering fiends. Now, servants of Demogorgon, the Prince of Demons, have found the means to unleash another savage tide, and the heroes are the only ones standing in they way. After a harrowing sea voyage, they find themselves on the Isle of Dread, and from there they travel to Demogorgon's realm in the Abyss to destroy the Prince of Demons and stop the savage tide from washing away their world.

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| Exploring Gauntlgrym | Bruce R. Cordell | 183 |
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| Gloomwrought's Movers & Shakers | Andy Clautice | 190 |
| Hero Battle: Drizzt | Chris Sims & Chris Youngs | 171 |
| Mark of Nerath Encounters | Bill Slavicsek | 181 |
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## Global Positioning (d20 Modern Maps)

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| Large Family Residence | Christopher West | 101 |
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| Modern Cemetery | Christopher West | 102 |
| Modern Cineplex | Christopher West | 109 |
| Municipal Police Station | Christopher West | 98 |
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| Sleazy Urban Bar | Christopher West | 102 |

**Writer Spotlight: James Jacobs**

James was fourteen years old when his first adventure, "Scepter of the Underworld," appeared in *Dungeon*. In the years since, he has brought his love of dungeon crawls and Lovecraftian horror to the magazine on several occasions with such contributions as "Thunder Under Needlespire" (Issue #24), "Lord of the Scarlet Tide" (Issue #85), "Headless" (Issue #89), and "Into the Wormcrawl Fissure" (Issue #134). His most controversial outing was "Porphyry House Horror" (Issue #95), a sealed "mature audiences only" adventure written to promote *The Book of Vile Darkness*. Aside from the orgies and rampant drug abuse, it delivered exactly what readers have come to expect from James: thrilling dungeons, wickedly imaginative villains, a gift for naming things, and a cavalier disregard for player character safety.

**"Scepter of the Underworld" (Issue #12)**
**"Thunder Under Needlespire" (Issue #24)**
**"Twilight's Last Gleaming" (Issue #35)**
**"Lord of the Scarlet Tide" (Issue #85)**
**"Headless" (Issue #89)**
**"The Razing of Redshore" (Issue #92)**
**"Porphyry House Horror" (Issue #95)**
**"Flood Season" (Issue #98)**
**"Maure Castle" (Issue #112)**
**"Into the Wormcrawl Fissure" (Issue #134)**
**"There Is No Honor" (Issue #139)**

**"Maure Castle: The Greater Halls" (Issue #139)**
**Written by Robert J. Kuntz**

After the rousing success that was "Maure Castle" (Issue #112), fans were left clamoring for more. "Chambers of Antiquities" (Issue #124) presented another level of the infamous Maure Castle dungeon, and "The Greater Halls" describes yet another. The Greater Halls has all the qualities of a classic D&D dungeon, and players could spend hours in any one of its deadly rooms.

## Lords of Chaos

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| Olhydra and Yan-C-Bin | Michael E. Shea | 199 |

## Map of Mystery

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**Common Ground: Thrilling Heists**

Bank heists and similar capers make for exciting adventures. In "Vlindarian's Vault" (Issue #141) by Johnathan M. Richards, the heroes are hired by a silver dragon to rescue her captured mate, who has been locked away in an underground bank vault. What makes this attempted robbery more difficult is the fact that the vault is owned and operated by a beholder mage and his staff of beholder cultists. In "The Aundairian Job" (Issue #147) by Craig Shackleton, the heroes are hired by a priest of the Silver Flame to steal an amulet containing a rakshasa's life force, which is locked inside a House Kundarak bank. "Blood Money" (Issue #200) by Logan Bonner pits heroes against an army of evil mercenaries, and the only way to beat them is to steal the money from their employer's vault beneath his fortified keep.

**"Diplomacy" (Issue #144)**
**Written by Christopher Wissel**

In "Diplomacy," as its title suggests, words are more powerful than weapons. To help the forces of good acquire a planar diamond mine, the heroes must match wits against competing bidders and distinguish themselves in honor duels and formal debate. They must find the weaknesses in their rivals' arguments—a tall order when such rivals include an arcanaloth, a modron, a xorn king, and a mercane bard.

***Seeds of Sehan* Trilogy (Issues #145-147)**
**Written by Tom Ganz with B. Matthew Conklin III, Stefan Happ, Stephen S. Greer, and Ashavan Doyon**

In "Vile Addiction" (Issue #145), a gang of spriggan drug dealers threatens to turn the city of Exag into a haven of addicts, but their addictive concoction has unexpected side effects, transforming users into horrid plantlike monsters. In "Spawn of Sehan" (Issue #146), the heroes track the source of the spriggan's drug to a sinister cult in the Yatil foothills, which in

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## Polyhedron Mini-Games

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turn leads to the magnificent mountain stronghold where fiendish yak folk and their dark allies plot to control the world in "Dread Pagoda of the Inscrutable Ones" (Issue #147).

**Issue #150**
**Written by Wolfgang Baur, Jason Bulmahn, Nicolas Logue, Sean K Reynolds, F. Wesley Schneider, Todd Stewart, James Lafond Sutter, and Greg A. Vaughan**

The adventurers and their allies confront Demogorgon in "Prince of Demons," the harrowing finale of the *Savage Tide* Adventure Path. "Kill Bargle" features not only a classic dungeon crawl but also the not-so-triumphant return of a renegade evil magic-user last seen in the original D&D Basic Game "red box." Rounding out the issue is "Quoth the Raven," a murder mystery in the city of Sharn that turns into a deadly game of cat-and-mouse against a villain the heroes have faced once before. Issue #150 marked the end of the Paizo Publishing era, with subsequent issues produced digitally by Wizards of the Coast.

**"Hell's Heart" (Issue #151)**
**Written by Nicolas Logue**

Viktor Saint-Demain was a brilliant inquisitive who put many of Sharn's worst criminals behind bars. Then he lost his mind and became like the killers he incarcerated. Heroes have faced him twice before ("Chimes at Midnight" in Issue #133 and "Quoth the Raven" in Issue #150). Now that he's locked away in the prison-asylum of Hell's Heart, what damage can he do? As it turns out, quite a lot.

**"The Last Breaths of Ashenport" (Issue #152)**
**Written by Ari Marmell**

First written as a 3rd Edition adventure and then updated for 4th Edition (Issue #156), "The Last Breaths of Ashenport" is a Lovecraftian horror story in which the heroes must save a town held in thrall

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| Convention Survival Guide | Stephen Radney-MacFarland | 169 |
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by Dagon. As they delve into coastal caverns to thwart his foul cultists, they encounter all manner of dreadful things, from fish-men to nameless monstrosities.

**"Prisoner of the Castle Perilous" (Issue #153)**
**Written by Stephen S. Greer**

Acererak's simulacrum tries to follow in its creator's footsteps, capturing souls to fuel its own ascension. In "Prisoner of the Castle Perilous," a quest to find a lost paladin leads to the Negative Material Plane and Acererak's tower, which was ripped from the cursed demiplane of Moil. This adventure has many ties to the classic adventure *Return to the Tomb of Horrors* and features one of D&D's great villains.

**Adventure Path: *Scales of War***
**Written by Logan Bonner, Creighton Broadhurst, Bruce R. Cordell, Scott Fitzgerald Gray, Kevin Kulp, James Larrison, Ari Marmell, Daniel Marthaler, David Noonan, Robert J. Schwalb, Chris Tulach, and Greg A. Vaughan**

The longest-running and most ambitious Adventure Path yet (Issues #156–175), *Scales of War* slowly but surely draws adventurers into a war between the dragon gods Bahamut and Tiamat. In the course of thirty levels, they face all manner of threats including a shadar-kai arms dealer, githyanki warlords and diplomats, a corrupt mithral dragon, an efreet sultan, and Tiamat's five draconic exarchs. They also witness Bahamut's destruction and facilitate his rebirth before facing the Dragon Queen in a climactic battle worthy of song.

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| Fine Art of Table Management, The | Stephen Radney-MacFarland | 153 |
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| I'm Stephen. I Solve Problems. | Stephen Radney-MacFarland | 151 |
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***Tear of Ioun* Trilogy (Issues #161-163)**
**Written by Robert J. Schwalb**

"Touch of Madness" (Issue #161), "Depths of Madness" (Issue #162), and "Brink of Madness" (Issue #163) place the heroes in conflict with a deranged alienist-wizard who seeks to free a group of powerful kaorti—evil, corrupted priests of Ioun—that are trapped in the Far Realm. Along the way, they butt heads with a powerful mind flayer and the Stormcrows, a gang of evil mercenaries.

**"Haven of the Bitter Glass" (Issue #164)**
**Written by Kevin Kulp**

In "Haven of the Bitter Glass," the heroes must thwart a sophisticated and manipulative githyanki spy whose diplomatic skills have assured him safety within a human city. In the process, they can save potential githzerai allies from extermination, forge an alliance, infiltrate high society, and disrupt the lines of githyanki communication, thereby changing the course of war. This is one adventure in which the heroes can't solve their problems by simply slaying the villain.

**"Worse Than Death" (Issue #164)**
**Written by Robert J. Schwalb**

When a powerful aristocrat is kidnapped from his caravan, the adventurers are hired to find him and bring him back. Their investigation leads to a mad eladrin and his living constructs, including a foul pig-headed monstrosity named Ham and other horrors, and what they discover about the victim along the way forces the characters to look at their task in a new light.

## Star Wars RPG

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**"Storm Tower" (Issue #166)**
**Written by Christopher Perkins**

In December of 2008, the heroes of Acquisitions Incorporated teamed up with Wizards of the Coast to produce the sequel to their hugely popular D&D podcast. Wil Wheaton joined the fun as an elf avenger named Aeofel and accompanied Mike Krahulik (Jim Darkmagic), Jerry Holkins (Omin Dran), and Scott Kurtz (Binwin Bronzebottom) on their latest adventure. "Storm Tower" *is* that adventure.

**"Heart of the Forbidden Forge" (Issue #167)**
**Written by Luke Johnson**

A haunted creation forge on the edge of the Mournland is on the verge of falling into goblin hands. In "Heart of the Forbidden Forge," the heroes try to oust the goblin raiders and come face to face with the undead remnants of the forge's former masters as well as their greatest creation: a war-forged dragon!

**"Garaitha's Anvil" (Issue #167)**
**Written by Scott Fitzgerald Gray**

A high point in the *Scales of War* Adventure Path, "Garaitha's Anvil" pits the heroes against a githyanki admiral whose astral fleet is preparing for a full-scale invasion of the natural world. The adventurers must storm the astral shipyard and, with the aid of a hundred other mortal heroes, thwart the invasion. It all leads to a stunning ship-to-ship battle high above an astral gate.

***Chaos Scar* Series**
**Written by Various Authors**

Long ago, a meteor crashed into the world and left a scar across the face of the Nentir Vale, a deep valley

that has since attracted all manner of monsters. The *Chaos Scar* series (which premiered in Issue #171) presented mostly unrelated heroic-tier adventures set in and around the valley, encouraging characters to visit time and again. The deeper a traveler ventured into the Chaos Scar, the more dangerous the encounters became. The series concluded in Issue #197 with "Heart of the Scar," an adventure set in an evil fortress built atop the remnants of the crashed meteor.

**"Dead by Dawn" (Issue #176)**
**Written by Aeryn "Blackdirge" Rudel**

A highlight of the *Chaos Scar* adventure series, "Dead by Dawn" is a short scenario in which the heroes find themselves trapped by an army of zombies in a ruined temple. Fighting the hordes of zombies isn't a wise option, leaving the adventurers with no choice but to hole up, hold their ground, and survive the undead siege until daybreak, when the zombies return to their graves.

**"Cross City Race" (Issue #176)**
**Written by James "Grim" Desborough**

Wizards of the Coast ran a competition, asking freelancers to present their best adventure ideas, and the eventual winner from the freelancer submissions was "Cross City Race," which features a pulse-pounding footrace across the city against various competitors. Depending on which route they take, participants might run into danger, and some of the competitors are not above setting a few traps.

**"Lord of the White Field" (Issue #184)**
**Written by Daniel Marthaler**

In "Lord of the White Field," the characters navigate the ghoul-haunted ruins of the town of Hampstead while seeking answers to its sudden destruction and a means to prevent the terror from spreading. The harrowing journey tests their mental and spiritual endurance as much as their physical prowess as they traverse a landscape filled with the ravenous dead.

**"Evard's Shadow" (Issue #192)**
**Written by Daniel Marthaler**

This adventure takes place in the abandoned mansion of the legendary shadow wizard Evard. As the adventurers search for clues to Evard's fate in the ruined manse, they discover a dark reflection of the house in the Shadowfell and confront the great wizard's living shadow. "Evard's Shadow" takes place after the events chronicled in the D&D Encounters adventure *Dark Legacy of Evard*.

**"Leader of the Pack" (Issue #194)**
**Written by Julian Sieber**

Three years ago, Zelgar Lightborn's older brother, Ulmar, left the town of Silvergrail on a grand adventure and was cursed with lycanthropy. In "Leader of the Pack," Ulmar returns along with the rest of his pack to turn his brother into a werewolf like him. The heroes became entangled in this family matter and escort Zelgar to a final confrontation with his murderous brother.

**"Baba Yaga's Dancing Hut" (Issue #196)**
**Written by Craig Campbell**

"Baba Yaga's Dancing Hut" updates a classic 1st Edition adventure, Roger E. Moore's "The Dancing Hut" (published in *Dragon* #83), to 4th Edition, retaining the wackiness of the original while presenting a few new surprises. Accompanying it is an article that provides statistics and background information on the legendary archfey Baba Yaga and her servitors.

***Against the Giants* Series (Issues #197-200)**
**Written by Christopher Perkins**
**Based on the original by Gary Gygax**

Chris took Gary's classic adventure trilogy and updated it to 4th Edition, expanding on the original material to provide enough adventure content to fill the paragon tier. Chris also wrote an original adventure featuring stone giants titled "Warrens of the Stone Giant Thane," which is set between the hill giant and frost giant adventures.

**Writer Spotlight: Christopher Perkins**

Chris is *Dungeon*'s most prolific adventure writer and has been involved with the magazine for nearly a quarter century. Check out "A History of *Dungeon* (Not THE History of *Dungeon*)" in Issue #200 for more information. In addition to adventures published in *Dungeon*, he wrote three adventures to promote the magazine in its sister publication, *Dragon*: "Wyrmsmere" (*Dragon Annual* #1),

"Dragonwyr" (*Dragon Annual* #2), and "The Kindness of Strangers" (*Dragon Annual* #4). He also wrote a bonus twelfth adventure for *The Shackled City* Adventure Path ("Drakthar's Way") that appears only in the printed hardcover edition.

**"Wards of Witching Ways" (Issue #11)**
**"A Wizard's Fate" (Issue #37)**
**"Horror's Harvest" (Issue #38)**
**"Rudwilla's Stew" (Issue #45)**
**"Quelkin's Quandary" (Issue #47)**
**"Them Apples" (Issue #48)**
**"North of Narborel" (Issue #49)**
**"The Bandits of Bunglewood" (Issue #51)**
**"My Lady's Mirror" (Issue #52)**
**"Elexa's Endeavor" (Issue #53)**
**"Redcap's Rampage" (Issue #54)**
**"Umbra" (Issue #55)**
**"The Menacing Malady" (Issue #58)**
**"Seeking Bloodsilver" (Issue #59)**
**"Nemesis" (Issue #60)**
**"Dragon's Delve" (Issue #62)**
**"Gnome Droppings" (Issue #63)**
**"Bzallin's Blacksphere" (Issue #64)**
**"The Ice Tyrant" (Issue #65)**
**"Avenging Murik" (Issue #66)**
**"Uzaglu of the Underdark" (Issue #67)**
**"Convergence" (Issue #68)**
**"The Scourge of Scalabar" (Issue #74)**
**"Tears for Twilight Hollow" (Issue #90)**
**"Life's Bazaar" (Issue #97)**
**"The Lich-Queen's Beloved" (Issue #100)**
**"Lords of Oblivion" (Issue #111)**
**"Strike on Shatterhorn" (Issue #115)**
**"Asylum" (Issue #116)**
**"Storm Tower" (Issue #166)**
**"Steading of the Hill Giant Chief" (Issue #197)**
**"Warrens of the Stone Giant Thane" (Issue #198)**
**"Glacial Rift of the Frost Giant Jarl" (Issue #199)**
**"Hall of the Fire Giant King" (Issue #200)**

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# A History of Dungeon
## (But Not THE History of Dungeon)

*By Christopher Perkins*

*Illustrations by Scott Murphy, Tony DiTerlizzi, Keith Parkinson, Roger Raupp, Rebecca Guay, Carl Critchlow, and Wayne Reynolds*

*"Sorry, I don't want any adventures, thank you. Not today."*
— Bilbo Baggins
*The Hobbit*, J.R.R. Tolkien

When I was seventeen years old, TSR announced that it was creating a *Dragon*® magazine "spinoff" dedicated to publishing adventures. The magazine didn't even have a name at that point, although an obvious choice would present itself soon enough. When the first issue of *Dungeon*® arrived in my mailbox, I nearly died of euphoria. I told my next-door neighbor that I wanted to be the editor of *Dungeon* magazine and work for TSR one day. It marked the first and last time I had a career epiphany. Eleven years later, TSR was dead and I was teaching senior-grade English to adults who'd gone back to school to earn their high school diplomas.

In 1997, after TSR imploded, most of the company's creative staff left Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, to join Wizards of the Coast. That's when I got THE CALL from Pierce Watters, publisher of TSR's periodicals department, informing me that *Dungeon* needed a new editor. But I'm getting ahead of myself! Let's flash back to that magical time in 1986 when the magazine was one issue old.

In his inaugural editorial, Roger E. Moore wrote: "Dungeon . . . *is a new periodical from TSR, Inc., in which you, the readers, may share your own adventures . . . with legions of other fantasy gamers. Each issue offers a number of fairly short (but often quite complicated and long-playing) modules, selected from the best we receive.*"

By the time Issue #1 was published, I had already received a lovely rejection letter from Roger. He was culling through manuscripts to help fill the first year's worth of issues and had stumbled upon a Top Secret/S.I.® adventure I had written, "Operation: Ice Capade." He liked it enough to request a revised draft, but alas, that adventure never saw the light of day, for by the time I sent in the revision, it was decided that *Dungeon* would support D&D® and AD&D® exclusively.[1] Perhaps out of pity, Roger accepted my next submission, an AD&D adventure titled "Wards of Witching Ways." I was seventeen when I wrote the first draft, eighteen when I received the good news,

[1] That decision was reversed periodically throughout the magazine's history, although the purists *hated* non-D&D chocolate in their D&D peanut butter.

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and nineteen when the adventure was finally published in 1987.

University sidelined my D&D campaign and writing career for several years. In 1991, I graduated and began bombarding the TSR periodicals department with adventure proposals and SASEs. Barbara G. Young, *Dungeon*'s second editor (Issues #9–51), was very patient and nurturing:

"*The good news is that we like your work.*"

—October 21, 1991

"*I've seen so much of your work that I'm starting to say, 'Which of these Perkinses should I take?' You're competing with yourself by sending too much at once.*"

—January 16, 1992

Even though he was up to his eyeballs in *Dragon* submissions, Roger also found time to scribble notes on my manuscripts. Here's my favorite Roger quote:

"*I like weird stuff, but this is too weird.*"

—July 17, 1991

Roger was referring to my proposal for an AD&D module titled "Kelvin Wickerclock's Whimsical Adventure," featuring a rootin', tootin', six-shootin' buckaroo named Tex "Tombstone" Cully, a gangster named Biglips Morrison, a pair of ninja assassins, and a B-movie film director named Zack "the Hack" Moriarty, who needs extras for his new slasher movie. My pitch also promised a pygmy hunting party, a WWI flying ace in a biplane, and a gnome who sets the whole adventure in motion.

*Wow.* It's a darn shame I never actually got to write that one. A darn shame.[2]

During the "Young years," I pitched scores of adventure ideas and submitted dozens of manuscripts, never quite knowing what the editors wanted and/or needed at any given time but doing my utmost not to offend them or become unworthy of their attention. Barbara very cleverly focused some of my energy on playtesting adventures written by other authors. By 1993, I had become a go-to guy for playtesting feedback.

Being a *Dungeon* playtester gave me a ridiculous advantage over other magazine contributors. Not only did I gain insight into the editors' preferences, I learned some adventure-writing lessons by quietly dissecting other contributors' ideas and narrative techniques. I stepped up my game and used my "secret knowledge" to help the editors fill gaps in their content calendars. Most important, being a playtester helped me contribute to the magazine in a volunteer capacity—something that would pay off BIGTIME years later, shortly before the big TSR implosion. But again, I get ahead of myself.

I was sad when Barbara Young left *Dungeon* to become a fiction editor at TSR. She and I had established a genuine rapport (she even called me on the phone once!). I remember fondly her red, handwritten notes on my manuscripts—a visceral, vaguely sado-masochistic editorial exchange that email has, sadly, all but eradicated. Also, I had matured enough as a writer to receive the occasional special assignment. "We need a D&D Basic adventure!" became "Them Apples" (Issue #48). "We have this poster map, but no adventure to go with it!" became "Elexa's Endeavor" (Issue #53).

Barbara's replacement was Wolfgang Baur, a fellow contributor who served as Barbara's associate editor *slash* partner-in-crime for three years. Wolf and I have the same alignment, so we got along well from the start.[3] Wolf only steered the ship for a couple issues (Issues #52–53) before he jumped over to *Dragon*, where in theory he could do considerably more damage.

My best Wolf story is this: When I joined Wizards in 1997, I inherited a box full of correspondence, including several overstuffed folders labeled "Perkins." These were filled with copies of my back-and-forth letters with previous *Dungeon* editors. Leafing through the pages, I discovered to my amazement that Wolf's comments were all over proposals and submissions I'd sent to Barbara. Here's the one that always makes me smile:

"*Original, but still not* Dungeon *quality.*"

—May 27, 1993

Years later, when our roles were reversed and Wolf was writing an adventure for me (the Lovecraftian "Kingdom of the Ghouls," published in Issue #70), he was the most professional freelancer a fledgling editor could hope for.

Dave Gross became *Dungeon*'s fourth editor (Issues #54–59), bringing with him his experience working on *Polyhedron*®, the RPGA newszine. By the time Dave took the reins, I had become a prolific contributor, and Dave was familiar with my work. Our first project together was "Umbra" (Issue #55), an overly long Planescape® adventure.[4] More gratifying than seeing the adventure in print was the note Dave sent to me afterward:

"*I still think it's one of the very best things printed in* Dungeon."

—September 25, 1995

The other thing I remember about "Umbra" that's worth mentioning for posterity is the cover art, done by the amazing Tony DiTerlizzi (of *The Spiderwick Chronicles* fame). It was glorious. The icing on the cake

[2] I'd be lying if I said that was my worst proposal. At least "Kelvin Wickerclock" was imaginative. The same could not be said for some of my other early pitches.

[3] You'll have to guess which alignment because I'm not going to tell you!

[4] Dave asked me to trim 5,000 words, but I think I talked him down to 2,500.

is that Tony gave me the original painting, which hangs to this day above the dresser in my bedroom.

Dave Gross was my first real friend at TSR. We were both teachers in another lifetime, so we had common ground. As a teacher, I did most of my adventure writing in the summer. However, in the summers of 1994 and 1995, shortly before TSR went *kaplooie*, I took a break from my writing regimen and drove down to Lake Geneva to help Dave and the other editors plow through the leaning stacks of submissions on their desks. Dave welcomed me with open arms, introduced me to Pierce Watters (and his amazing Texas cooking), took me out for beers, and put me to work. (Not in that order, mind you.) Dave and I worked so well together, in fact, that when Pierce was looking to rebuild the periodicals team under the Wizards aegis, he put Dave and me back together as the collaborative editors of *Dragon* and *Dungeon*, respectively.[5]

While researching this article, I re-read every letter sent to me by every *Dungeon* editor before my time. Every one of Dave's letters is a masterpiece of correspondence, a testament to his writing skill. I wish I could share them in their entirety, but suffice to say, they are better than any letter I've ever written.

Dave coaxed me into writing an editorial once, whereupon he discovered that a good adventure writer does not an editorial writer make:

*"I'm afraid I would like to see a different editorial from you . . . something that lets a little more of your personality out and doesn't sound quite so much like a lesson . . . I'd like your editorial to be a knock-out."*

—October 9, 1995

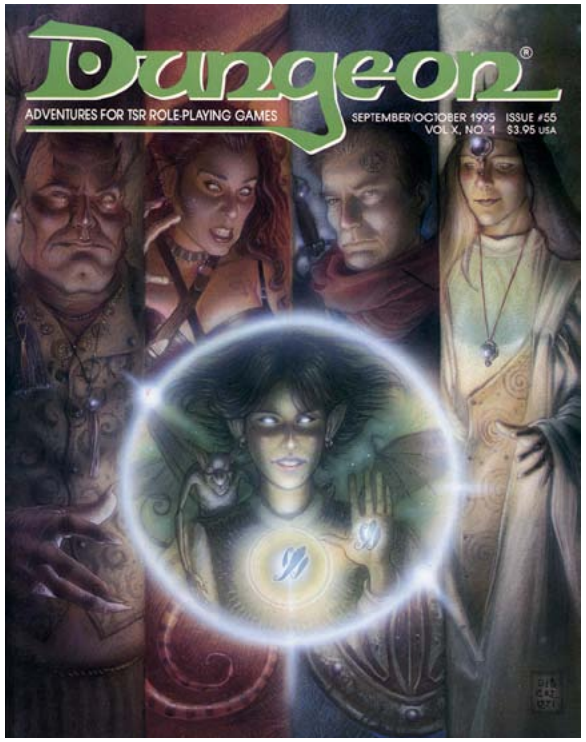
Ouch. In other words, *your editorial sucketh*. See what I mean about Dave's writing skill?[6]

Dave switched hats with Anthony Bryant, then-editor of *Dragon* magazine, but Tony only stuck around for one issue of *Dungeon* (Issue #60) before Michelle Vuckovich stepped in to become the magazine's sixth editor.[7] Michele wasn't an active D&D player as far as I could tell, but she understood the magazine's mandate and knew a good story when she read it. If Michelle rejected any of my submissions, I have no record of it. I remember she asked me to write a Dragonlance: Fifth Age® adventure—the only writing assignment I wish I had turned down. (Don't get me wrong—I like the setting, but when it comes to roleplaying games, I'm a dice man!)

By the time Michelle took the helm (Issues #61-64), I was practically an honorary member of the periodicals team—or Canadian mascot, depending on whom you asked. If I did something Michelle didn't like, she just ignored me until I got the hint. I always had the biggest laughs working with Michelle because she kept me posted on all the weird and wacky developments at TSR . . . things that would make you laugh and cry at the same time.

In 1996, I stopped writing adventures for *Dungeon* because I knew TSR didn't have the money to pay me anymore. At the time, I had seven adventures awaiting publication ("Dragon's Delve," "Gnome Droppings," "Bzallin's Blacksphere," "The Ice Tyrant," "Avenging Murik," "Uzaglu of the Underdark," and "The Scourge of Scalabar"), only one of which was likely to land in subscribers' laps.

"Dragon's Delve" was printed in Issue #62, along with a cost-cutting cover by Henry Higgenbotham, the talented sculptor who would later become well known for his fantastic cover design work on the 3rd Edition core rulebooks. Then Issue #63 was produced but delayed because TSR didn't have the money to pay the printer. Folks in the office were fussing with




This painting by Tony DiTerlizzi hangs on my bedroom wall.

Issue #64, but the odds of it being published seemed slim and none.

The last time I visited TSR was in the summer of 1996. The staff was still being paid to work on stuff, but it was analog vaporware, and no one knew from one day to the next if they would have a job when they woke up the following morning. Despite the dire situation, people weren't impaling themselves on swords. Quite the contrary: the creative staff, as far as I could tell, were making the best of an unfortunate situation and having a few laughs at their own expense.[8]

When Wizards swooped in and snatched D&D from the jaws of death, Peter Adkison had the

[5] Those legendary Canadian manners and all that sucking up really paid off.

[6] I'm not a great reader or fan of fantasy fiction (too close to my day job), but Dave Gross is one of the few fantasy novelists whose writing draws me in. I think he has a very good ear for dialogue, probably because he talks a lot.

[7] Which makes me Lucky Number Seven.

[8] Actually, there *was* the Mask of Valor, a fencing mask that you had to wear while coworkers hurled darts at your face. No one died, so it was okay.

wherewithal and sanity to hire most of TSR's creative talent as well. Michelle Vuckovich decided to stay behind and pursue a master's degree, and that's when the position of *Dungeon* editor opened up. Not long thereafter, I received THE CALL:

*"It's Pierce. How would you like to be the new editor of* Dungeon *magazine?"*

—Best Day Ever, 1997

Huh. Let me think about it for, like, *zero seconds*.

I spent the next several months working with Pierce and Human Resources on my work visa, and everything was going well. I was scheduled to make my American debut at Gen Con '97, but a disagreeable border patrol officer who blamed me personally for the Salmon Fishing War (perhaps you've never heard of it) held me up and called my Wizards paperwork the worst forgeries he'd ever seen. He also threatened to confiscate my car, which, incidentally, was paid for with money earned writing for *Dungeon* magazine.

By the time that misunderstanding got cleared up, Gen Con had passed, and I found myself in Renton, Washington, waiting for the rest of TSR to show up. On my first day, I unpacked that aforementioned box of correspondence left behind by the *Dungeon* editors before me—files that to this day remind me of where I began, where I ended up, and the people who helped me along the way.

Wizards not only pulled D&D out of the ashes but also kept the magazines alive. The company put up the cash to publish Issue #63, and my number-one task as *Dungeon* editor was to get Issue #64 out the door and into the hands of subscribers. Issue #65 was my first official issue as *Dungeon* editor, and right there, staring me dead in the face, was that damn Dragonlance: Fifth Age adventure! It's wasn't enough that I had to write it; now I had to *edit* it, too!

Several of the adventures that appeared in my earliest issues were selected before my time. I really didn't begin to make my mark until Issue #69, which kicked off a five-part series of adventures set in the Forgotten Realms® campaign setting. *Dungeon* had never attempted a long-running series before, and *The Mere of Dead Men* set the stage for several memorable Adventure Paths to follow. Looking back at the four years' worth of issues that bear my name as editor (Issues #65–89), there's nothing that makes me cringe and a lot of stuff I'm proud of. There's even an adventure by Roger E. Moore![9]

What I'm less proud of is the redesign that happened with the launch of 3rd Edition. To make the magazines more attractive on newsstands, we gave them to an outside studio to refresh. It was like watching your daughters being taken from you, dressed up like harlots, and left on street corners to peddle their wares.[10] I managed to pull *Dungeon* back inside the house and spent the next year trying to restore her elegance and dignity. For the magazine's long-term health, it made sense to transition from black-and-white to color, but I think some of her simple charm was forever lost as a consequence.

In an idyllic world, every person figures out what he or she wants to do and does it—whether that's being a writer, a lawyer, a veterinarian, a parent, a teacher, an engineer, or whatever. To do anything else is a waste of time and talent. I was very fortunate to land the *Dungeon* job. For years, I ran *Dungeon* as a one-man show, moonlighting as art director and occasional cartographer. Then *Star Wars Gamer* and *Star Wars Insider* landed on my lap, and after a year of juggling content for three magazines and dealing with licensor approvals, I was burned out. Bill Slavicsek offered me a creative director job, and I took it.

Chris Thomasson became the eighth editor of *Dungeon* after I left (Issues #90–102). Chris pitched the idea of the Shackled City, *Dungeon*'s first Adventure Path, and asked me to write the kick-off adventure just to get the ball rolling.[11] Then Chris, along with the rest of the periodicals team, splintered off to form the backbone of Paizo Publishing.

Wizards was looking to get out of the newsstand magazine business—a wise decision, given the state of the magazine publishing industry. However, for a small company like Paizo, the D&D magazines were a foundation upon which to build a business. Chris was at the helm when *Dungeon* went from bimonthly to monthly publication, and when *Dungeon* and *Polyhedron* were fused into a humongous, bipolar super-mag. One or both of those changes practically drove him mad. If you ever see Chris at a convention, buy him a beer and ask him about it.

Truth be told, I never fully relinquished my hold on *Dungeon* even when it was in Paizo's care. When I wasn't off writing Shackled City adventures, I would insert myself into the Wizards approval process, if only to marvel at the work being done.

Erik Mona (Issues #103–138) and James Jacobs (Issues #139–150) became *Dungeon*'s ninth and tenth editors, respectively. Erik is a brilliant RPG industry wunderkind who knows what makes D&D players drool, and James Jacobs, himself a frequent *Dungeon* contributor, is the best D&D adventure designer on the planet, tied with Richard Baker.[12] What Erik and James did with *Dungeon* is a marvel to behold, and I'm more than a little envious of their best work, not the least of which were two outstanding Adventure Paths (*Age of Worms* and *Savage Tide*). Their issues were fearless and ambitious. As the licensor, Wizards had final approval over all magazine content, which meant that Erik and James paid us frequent visits to

[9] "The Door from Everywhere" (Issue #88).

[10] It sounds harsh, but crack open Issue #82 and you'll see what I mean.

[11] I would contribute several more before the series was done, much to my surprise. My favorite of the bunch is still the first one, "Life's Bazaar" (Issue #97).

[12] These two juggernauts would eventually join forces to write *Red Hand of Doom*, one of the best D&D adventures ever published.

get buyoff on their mad schemes—nerve-wracking for them, I imagine, but sheer delight for me.[13]

*Dungeon* #150 wrapped up the *Savage Tide* Adventure Path and marked the end of the Paizo era. The magazine went digital, with subscriber articles posted in PDF format. In the issues that followed, we saw the return of Chris Thomasson as editor—or, rather, Chris *Youngs* (Issues #151-178). Thomasson and Youngs are the same guy, although in some respects they're like night and day. Experience will do that to you:

*"I've held every editorial position they could come up with: Editorial Assistant (as Chris Carlson), Assistant Editor, Associate Editor, Editor (all as Chris Thomasson), and Editor-in-Chief . . . but it was working on* Dungeon *#72, my first issue, where I first thought, 'This is what I get to do now? Read D&D and get paid for it?' Yes, the job is that cool."*

—June 1, 2010

Youngs brought us one more Adventure Path (*Scales of War*, the biggest and most ambitious yet!) before accepting a well-earned promotion.[14] That opened the door for *Dungeon*'s eleventh editor, Steve Winter, who is one of the designers of AD&D 2nd Edition and a walking encyclopedia of game lore. A legend within the gaming industry, Steve understood the ins and outs of D&D better than anyone, and his fondness for *Dungeon* matched my own:

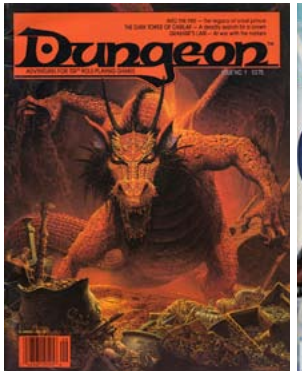
*"The very best part of my job is selecting adventures for publication in* Dungeon *and working with authors to develop them. In the final analysis, the entire point of a D&D session is adventure. Players don't gather around the table to OOH and AHH over one another's characters. They assemble to stomp monsters, explore dark places, gather loot, and protect the world against evil."*

—October 6, 2010

During Steve's reign (Issues #179-189), *Dungeon* published some of the most conceptually intriguing adventures in its history. Steve eventually went crazy (as magazine editors tend to do) and was put in one of those, you know, funny farms, but I hear he's happy there. He sent me a letter to let me know he's doing well. Well, actually, it was just a blank sheet of foolscap, but with Steve it's really about what's *not* on the page.[15]

Issue #190 marked my return to *Dungeon* in a hands-on capacity, and it's weird to find myself doing many of the same things I was doing back in 1997, now with the wisdom that comes with fifteen years in the gaming industry. (Gone are the days of my moonlighting as an art director, for starters.) *Dungeon* is nearly a quarter century old, having survived the passing of editions while clinging to its mandate. What Roger Moore envisioned when he wrote the first editorial in Issue #1 is the vision I hold today. *Dungeon* promises and delivers adventures—the best of the best. So has it been, and so will it be.






#1. The very first one.

#11. My first published work.

#65. My first issue as editor.

#82. The "problem child."

#100. My favorite issue.

#150. Paizo's farewell issue.

[13] All this praise begs the question of why Wizards would take back *Dragon* and *Dungeon* after so fruitful a partnership. In my opinion, it wasn't a reflection on the magazines' quality or its stewards, but rather the magazine business, which was in the toilet (and still is). Subscriptions were way down, and we were launching a new edition of the D&D game and wanted article and adventure support in the digital space. At the time, it didn't make sense to have an online publication and a print publication competing with one another. But a lot can change, particularly with a new iteration of the D&D game on the horizon. Who knows what forms *Dungeon* (and *Dragon*) might take in the years ahead?

[14] Chris Youngs is now our D&D digital games manager at Wizards R&D, in case you hadn't heard.

[15] Steve did nothing of the kind. It just seemed like a funny thing to write, and I hope it makes Steve laugh when he reads it. Everything else in here is true, though, I swear.

# Backdrop: Skullport

*By Matt Goetz*

*Illustration by Brian Valenzuela*
*Cartography by Mike Schley*

Hunched on the banks of the subterranean River Sargauth, Skullport is no stranger to death and destruction. Built on the site of a long-dead Netherese encampment, more than once Skullport has weathered storms that have brought it to the tattered edge of annihilation. No matter how unlikely it seemed that this Port of Shadow could rebuild after a devastating event, each time it has risen from its bones to exist again.

A festering sore on Undermountain, Skullport lies deep beneath the streets of Waterdeep. Far from the prying eyes of the Waterdhavian lords, the city long had a reputation as a hub of illicit trade, fed by a stream of pirate vessels that used the port as a hidden sanctuary. After falling victim to disaster upon disaster, that stream became a trickle, but the intermittent influx of goods, coupled with Skullport's relative autonomy, has drawn a bizarre range of creatures to the city. Outcast drow, plotting illithids, luckless merchants, spellscarred refugees, and the worst criminals of Waterdeep struggle to survive on Skullport's narrow, wooden streets.

Built within an immense cavern, the port is a dense and erratic array of reclaimed materials constructed in layers to fill the cave's limited space. Narrow walkways and gangplanks thread through the chaos, creating makeshift streets between the creaking stilt-houses and ruins of the city, intermittently lit by thrashing lantern-eels held in suspended globes of Sargauth water. Overhead, a thick layer of dripping mold covers the ceiling, glowing sickly when stirred by the currents of air in the cavern. This wan green light, known as the Gloam, is Skullport's poor imitation of the night sky.

## Culture

To protect against the brackish water that constantly drips from overhead, longtime inhabitants of the port—colloquially called "Skulkers"—wear thick mantles of oiled canvas and broad-brimmed hats that cast their faces into shadow. True Skulkers are easy to distinguish from visitors to Skullport by the cloths they wear over their mouths and noses when on the streets. Even though these cloths are soaked in sweet-smelling oils to keep the stench of the cavern and river at bay, they provide small comfort. The fetid smell of the river has a way of seeping into everything, permanently marking objects with a faint stink. When items soiled with "riverstench" make their way to the surface, they are sold for steep discounts, since nothing short of ritual magic can work the reek of Skullport out of them.

Things in the Port of Shadow have a way of aging before their time, and the people are no exception. Most Skulkers exude the hunched bitterness of a

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long and unfair life, medicating their woes with the strongest drinks that they can buy or steal. Some say the cold and damp causes this, but the superstitious blame the city, saying that somehow it feeds on its small population like a leech.

Lacking anything that could even jokingly be called a day, the people of Skullport measure time like a ship's crew: in "bells" of roughly four hours each. The system was initially devised so that the crews of visiting ships could keep a consistent schedule with the people of the port, and the city's oldest inhabitants insist on continuing the tradition.

At the start of each four-hour block, timekeepers around Skullport ring corroded bells that have been salvaged from sunken ships. The hollow peals drift across the city, marking the passage of time. The only exception is during the watch in the middle of the night. Rather than many chimes, a single bell is struck—a tremendous, grime-encrusted, pitch-black bell whose low, mournful tone echoes through the night. The people of Skullport are superstitious regarding the hours marked by the Black Bell, believing them to be an unlucky time when monsters and misfortune claim their victims.

Deep currents of rivalry run through the city. Long-time Skulkers resent the city's recent newcomers; the poor resent those who have coin for taking what little the infrequently visiting pirates have to offer; and pirates resent the wretches who have long lurked in the shadows of the port, preventing them from taking it over. All of Skullport would have dissolved under the conflict of its inhabitants were it not for the mysterious sentinels who keep watch over it—the grisly disembodied Skulls from which the city gets its name.

## History

The origin of the Port of Shadow dates back many centuries to when a group of Netherese mages settled in the region to perform their art. Known to history as the Sargauth Enclave, these mages fashioned many wonders in their cavern, the greatest of which was the mantle, an artificial copy of an elven *mythal*. Although the mantle provided the caverns with strength and protection, it was also the enclave's undoing. During the first true disaster of Skullport, which happened at the same time as the fall of Netheril, magical surges ripped through the mantle, destroying much of the enclave and killing its inhabitants—with a few exceptions. Thirteen mages were absorbed and altered, becoming disembodied skulls that would keep watch over the city through its many future iterations.

From that point on, Skullport's history has several distinct eras. The first, starting in 1148 DR, was a time of relative prosperity, when the necromancer Shradin Mulophor petitioned Halaster Blackcloak, lord of the Underhalls, to settle on the ruins of a long-dead Netherese enclave. For centuries, Skullport stood as one of the chief ports of trade in the Underdark, and it was fed a steady supply of trade on magically diverted rivers and through the mystical gates that lined its walls. This was Skullport at its height: a seemingly lawless den of merchants, pirates, slavers, and other sordid elements.

This era came crashing down in the late 1300s. A slaad named Azriim tampered with the mantle, weakening it to the point that it could no longer support the weight of the cavern above it. In a moment, much of the Port of Shadow was destroyed; hundreds died as the ceiling of Skullport partially collapsed. The city might have rebuilt from that collapse, were it not for the coming of the Spellplague only a few years later. At this point, the weakened mantle twisted, firing off blasts of destructive energy that claimed many lives, before seemingly vanishing for good.

Gradually, most of the survivors fled the ruined city, letting it lie fallow. In these perilous years, Skullport became home to only a few hundred desperate creatures—blighted souls that squatted in the slowly collapsing bones of the city. For generations, it seemed Skullport was doomed.

In recent years, the city's outlook began to change. A young explorer named Miriam Sequora climbed up from the Yawning Portal in Waterdeep and began telling tales of Netherese artifacts and of rich veins of mithral she uncovered in the ruins of Skullport. Most Waterdhavians disregarded these stories, but Miriam won over a few citizens when she displayed a huge chunk of raw mithral and several old magic items of distinctly Netherese manufacture.

Word spread through Waterdeep's broadsheets, and a handful of merchants scrambled to send expeditions to the Port of Shadow, hiring delvers and sellswords to carve out their own claims in Skullport. Within months, Skullport became a permanent home to these first daring few. With them, small groups of merchants ventured down to the city, peddling their wares to the miners—known locally as skulldiggers—mercenaries, and pirates who occasionally inhabit the city.

Largely, Skullport exists in the shadow of its nearly complete destruction. Though the Port of Shadow is

### THE MANTLE

Does the mantle still exist? Yes and no. Although the Spellplague destroyed the original mantle, a bit of it remains in the rocks of the cavern. This remnant needs a constant supply of fuel to keep the cavern intact, which the Skulkers provide. A little bit of life force is drained from inhabitants to fuel this "new" mantle, which is the cause of their depression and their feeling prematurely aged. Additionally, those in the city knowingly feed the mantle, usually in the form of *residuum*, though some prefer the sacrifice of living magic users.

considered a relic and a rotting echo of its former self, each passing month brings with it a handful more of those who are brave and desperate enough to seek a new life among its moldering ruins.

## Laws and Government

To visitors, the Port of Shadow looks like a hollow ruin surrounded by a crumbling ghost town of abandoned buildings, with lurking gangs competing fiercely for territories that encompass a few narrow blocks. To a certain extent, that observation is accurate. Typically only a few dozen strong, gangs such as the Mandible, the Iron Ring, and the Lowfellows follow their own laws, holding their patches of Skullport with an almost fanatical control, leaving desperate loners to fill in the gaps and fight over whatever scraps the stronger gangs leave behind.

Though Skullport lacks a form of government and a codified body of laws, one group commands incontestable control over Skullport, and it strictly enforces its own law: the Skulls.

The Skulls do not seem overly concerned by the dilapidated state of Skullport, and they let the city's minor factions govern themselves. Instead, the Skulls watch trade within the city closely. Additionally, actions that would interfere with the city draw the attention of the Skulls, who exact unpredictable punishments for such deeds. For minor infractions, the Skulls demand seemingly random tasks such as giving your boots to the first slave you encounter or dropping a handful of coins at a certain place. Serious breaches of the law carry one of two punishments, either a period of slavery within the city or utter annihilation.

Defying the Skulls is unheard of, if not outright impossible. All the Skulls are powerful flameskulls that have access to a variety of mighty wizard powers and arcane rituals. They also control a small army of lesser servitor flameskulls and other magic-wielding undead. The Skulls have been known to summon their servants into an ongoing battle, turning the odds against those who dare defy them.

Although Skulls can fall in combat, slain Skulls always return to life. A mystical connection to the Port of Shadow allows a slain Skull to be reborn, sometimes ripping free from a random victim within Skullport. Such a rejuvenated Skull is eager to locate the creature or creatures arrogant enough to fight and kill it. Because of this, gangs in Skullport are careful to act unseen or through hapless proxies if they intend to carry out actions that might draw the fury of the Skulls.

### The Fourteenth Skull

Common wisdom holds that thirteen Skulls are watching over Skullport, and they all share a collective memory from their lives before. These memories have become so intertwined over the years that the Skulls are fundamentally interchangeable, with each being a piece of a gestalt entity.

Some claim that they have witnessed a fourteenth Skull. This mysterious Skull is said to operate independent of the others, following its own agenda within the city. Usually these stories come in the form of drunken bragging, but there is a grain of truth to them. The fourteenth Skull is all that remains of the Rag Mage. In life, he was an ascetic drow who had a connection to Skullport similar to the Skulls. His change into his current form happened when he became the last victim of the mantle, transformed by the Spellplague.

The few who believe in the fourteenth Skull lay praise—or blame, in the case of the Lowfellows—on it for the city's newest inhabitants. They claim that the fourteenth Skull was somehow responsible for the discovery of new mithral in the city and the skulldiggers who came with it.

## Organizations

In a place such as Skullport, which lacks a means or a desire to protect its inhabitants, affiliation with a group can mean the difference between life and death. Solitary people are sought by the unscrupulous as prey for robbery or fodder for the slave pits, so like-minded individuals gravitate to each other for the benefit of safety in numbers.

### The Mandible

Skullport's most influential gang, the Mandible, is a consortium of merchants, pirates, and successful skulldiggers. Working together to control the price of goods ranging from food to weapons to rent, they command the most power in Skullport aside from the Skulls.

The Mandible takes its name from a magic sword called the *Dragon's Tooth*, which was recovered from the ruins of the old city. The weapon was once wielded by a skulldigger to protect her mithral claim from potential interlopers. As members say, "Only the Mandible can hold the *Dragon's Tooth*." As a result, the item serves as a symbol of office within the group. Holding the *Dragon's Tooth* grants the wielder the authority to speak as a representative in public, and ownership carries with it de facto leadership of the Mandible. The sword has traded hands several times in the Mandible's short existence, usually in the aftermath of bloody duels.

The members of the Mandible control a band of armed Skulkers who enforce the Mandible council's edicts within their territory. Although the gang is still subject to the law of the Skulls, the Mandible is the closest thing the Port of Shadow has to any kind of government, which says more about the state of Skullport than it does about the gang.

The different members of the Mandible do not always speak with a combined voice, however. Bickering dominates the frequent meetings of the group as

the various members seek to advance their own agendas within the city.

## The Reforged Ring

At Skullport's height, a group called the Iron Ring controlled slave trade in the city. The original group dissolved over the years, but the market for slavery in Skullport did not. As new attempts are made to excavate the city ruins or mine its environs, slaves are sought to do the greater part of the work.

Recently, a group has taken up the slack of the former slavers. Calling themselves the Reforged Ring, they are as cruelly effective as their previous incarnation. They maintain a force of slaves, which they lease to skulldiggers who hope to obtain the city's mithral.

Second in size only to the Mandible, the slavers of the Reforged Ring own a scattered network of slave pens and workhouses throughout the city, and their raiding teams constantly sweep the streets of Skullport for those too weak to fend them off.

Each trusted associates of the group is marked in a ritualized ceremony; one of his or her ring fingers is grasped with a pair of hot iron tongs. This brand bonds the individual to the Reforged Ring and serves as a symbol of status within Skullport. To be marked by the Reforged Ring is to enter into a lifetime commitment, though. Many groups outside the city look unfavorably on slavery, and they do not hesitate to punish those who profit from it. Members kicked out of the group rarely survive their first encounter with someone outside Skullport who understands the meaning of the brand.

Although the Ring is an unpleasant, if accepted, part of Skullport, many groups within the city would like to see it driven out. The Lowfellows in particular despise the Ring, since slaves make up a large part of its membership, and abolitionist individuals in Skullport would like nothing more than to drive the slavers out of the city. This undercurrent of resentment runs deep in the Port of Shadow, causing some to say that the Ring is starting to show signs of rust.

## The Riverborn

A small, disorganized confederation of pirates known as the Riverborn operates from half-sunk ships off the shore of Skullport. Members are distinguished by tattoos of a black serpent, whose twisting form echoes the shape of the Sargauth. Having little love for merchant gangs and skulldiggers who vie for control of the city, the Riverborn refuse to serve on ships controlled by captains who consort with the gangs and frequently stalk and attack sailors who do. Although the Riverborn have no stated goals, they act in the hope of driving the city's new inhabitants—whom they see as interlopers—back to the streets of Waterdeep.

Their presence is tolerated because of their usefulness to those same lords. When a merchant wants to do harm to a rival without drawing the attention of the Skulls, he or she sends an agent to the drinking houses in the Dredge to drop hints about the rival's shipments, hoping to catch the attention of the Riverborn.

## The Lowfellows

Skullport has long been home to the worst dregs that the Northdark has to offer. The crumbling city has played home to exiles, murderers, creatures twisted with spellscars, and worse. As long as their depredations occurred outside the direct view of the Skulls, these inhabitants were free to indulge themselves, far outside society's scrutiny. Since the skulldiggers' arrival, however, things have begun to change. Some of Skullport's long-term inhabitants have integrated themselves into the fledgling society, but many more were driven from their homes, fleeing from the bands of skulldiggers like insects fleeing the light of a torch.

Some feel slighted by this turn of events. Some even seek revenge. A large group of longtime Skulkers has formed a secret society, known as the Lowfellows, who operate in shadow to punish the skulldiggers for their intrusion. They use sabotage, such as the collapse of a mine tunnel or the snap of a high Skullport bridge, to deal with skulldiggers. The Lowfellows avoid direct conflict not only because of the obvious consequences of drawing the ire of the Skulls, but also because they fear drawing more intruders into Skullport, whom they feel might seek retribution on the behalf of their family members.

Originally, the Lowfellows were only a few dozen strong. In recent months their ranks have swelled considerably, fed by Skulkers displaced with each new skulldigger's arrival, and with escaped slaves seeking to pay back their former masters.

## The Fray

These thirteen mages are the agents of the fourteenth Skull of Skullport. Wearing tattered robes, they emulate the fourteenth Skull as he was in life. Functionally homeless, they wander the streets of the city, muttering incomprehensible things to each other.

The fourteenth Skull carefully selected each member of the Fray to help him in his task of maintaining the weakened mantle. Selection for this duty brings with it potent abilities, and those chosen go mad with the power granted by the fourteenth Skull. Each member of the Fray can hear the whispers of its master no matter where it is in the city and is helpless to resist his commands. Members of the Fray are promised that when the mantle is fully restored, they will become the new Skulls of Skullport, a prospect that keeps these broken-minded creatures going.

Some of their work is relatively harmless, involving the theft of magic items to break down into *residuum* that the mantle can absorb. Occasionally, though, the mantle requires a greater sacrifice. At those times, the Fray must hunt down and murder one of the city's visiting magic users. The powerful essence of the victim is captured and directed by the Fray, and

although unpleasant, these sacrifices are vital to keep the newly built city intact.

# Locations

The structure of Skullport is a complicated affair of stilt buildings, scaffoldings, and bridges built vertically to make as much use of the limited space in the cavern as possible. From Skull Island in the south to the innermost chamber of the cavern, roughshod structures cover every conceivable inch. Built from the masts and beams of abandoned ships, scraps carried to the city by the Sargauth, and the ruins of previous incarnations of the city, the most recent incarnation of Skullport grew like mushrooms on the body of a waterlogged corpse. Now, much of the city lies crumbling and uninhabited, but pockets of life are scattered through the darkness. Skulldigger and Lowfellow, Riverborn and Fray—some people will always be hopeless enough to call a place like Skullport home.

In the past, class stratified the various tiers of the city. Those with the most power built their homes higher and higher, bringing them as far away from the fetid stink of the Sargauth as possible, while Skullport's poorest were driven down to the murky edge of the river. Although no clear boundaries exist between tiers, the Skulkers coined terms for each so that they could help one another navigate the chaotic streets of their city.

## The Crown

The uppermost tier of Skullport is called the Crown, which hints at the status of the people who once called it home. Although they are hovels by even the most generous Waterdhavian standards, the towers of the Crown, built as affluently as possible from local materials, were home to the merchants and pirate captains of old Skullport. In a place such as the Port of Shadow, something as simple as light is a privilege, and the Crown commands the best of it. Bathed in the Gloam from above, the towers of the Crown cast all the city beneath them in shadow. A few buildings of the Crown lie in chambers carved into stalactites on the cavern's ceiling, a reminder of the departed Netherese who once called it home.

The advent of the skulldiggers has caused a shift in the landscape of the Crown. It is a hotly contested territory, where bloody brawls are fought over the finest domiciles. Across the Crown, alehouses and gambling dens are cropping up to wrestle some coin away from the district's new inhabitants, and the skulldiggers seem eager to let them.

### Crookspar Parlor

Rising above the highest spires of the Crown is Crookspar Parlor, a two-story gambling den. Built with a commanding view of the city around it, Crookspar is infamous for the piles of coins won and lost daily at its gaming tables. The first floor is open to all comers and boasts a range of games. Upstairs, the parlor is divided into private rooms that can be rented by the hour for higher-stakes games.

In these private rooms, the leaders of Skullport's gangs compete with visiting pirates flush with treasure. Fistfuls of gold, deeds to ships, and the leases on dozens of slaves trade hands each day on the upper floor. Anything goes in these private games; the gamblers are constantly searching for new thrills. In a famous bout, the slave Meirion Rainerch joined a game at the behest of his drunken owner and walked away with not only his freedom, but also a hundred pounds of pirate loot and ownership of a half-dozen mining stakes across Skullport.

The leaders of Skullport have an unspoken nonaggression pact when it comes to Crookspar. An abiding love for wealth won easily is one of the few things they all have in common, and nothing spoils the mood of a good game of dice like attempted murder at the gaming table. Regardless of how deep-seated a rivalry might be on the streets of Skullport, enmity and vendetta are forgotten at Crookspar's door.

### The High Tide

Built atop a brewery on the level below, the High Tide is the largest alehouse in the Port of Shadow. Patronage at the High Tide is by invitation only, and its owner claims that his brews are the finest in all of Undermountain—a claim that is supported by the outrageous prices he demands. The leaders of Skullport are on the limited guest list, guaranteeing that they are never forced to drink alongside any of the less savory lower classes. The aromatic scents of brewing ale, toasted malts, and boiling hops serve to banish the worst of the reeking funk wafting from the Sargauth, and the residual heat from its kettles and fermenters makes High Tide more comfortable than any of the city's other taverns.

Those seeking information could ask for no better place than the High Tide. Though the deep booths and secluded tables that fill the pub discourage eavesdropping, the true owner of High Tide, an unassuming kobold named Gnawlip, sells the tidbits of plots and plans he gleans as he clears the tables of his patrons while dressed as a servant. The leaders of the city often come here to discuss matters of business, and the quiet, eminently ignorable Gnawlip is rarely given a second glance. A purse of gold or a knot of mithral in Gnawlip's nimble hands will elicit any number of choice rumors about the city's most influential residents, though Gnawlip always makes sure no one knows that he is directly responsible for providing this information. He seeks to remain as anonymous as possible in his dealings, so he uses various agents and methods of subterfuge to remain cloaked.

## The Venter

Most of Skullport is contained within the Venter, the cramped middle tier of the city. Home to most of the

SKULLPORT
The Crown (upper tier)
1 Mandible Headquarters
2 The High Tide
3 Crookspar Parlor
The Venter (middle tier)
4 The Pick and Lantern
5 The Nine Bells
6 Reforged Ring Headquarters
The Dredge (lower tier)
7 Scupperden
8 The Old Knave
9 The Grand Hoist
10 Kreel's Fishery
11 Riverborn Ships
The Threads
N
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S

city's inhabitants, the Venter features narrow alleys, and its streets are lined with empty market stalls, taverns, and multiple-family homes. In a city that has never known sunlight nor the kiss of the moon's glow, the streets of the Venter serve as a reminder of how much Skullport has lost. Places that once teemed with people now lie mostly empty, though some areas are sparsely inhabited by nests of slaves, lurking cutthroats, and marooned pirates. Everything the Venter has is for sale: secrets, swords, and people. Scattered storefronts display goods taken off pirate ships, while cavernous trading houses play home to mithral speculation. Back-alley dice games are a common sight in the Venter, as are foul drinking pits, where desperate merchants try to sell off waterlogged goods pulled from the Sarguath. The sparse population of the Venter toils in a constant struggle for survival in the savage environment of a decomposing city.

### The Nine Bells

This long, enormous warehouse juts out over the river on the masts of nine half-sunken ships, its belly lined with a thick net of hoists, cables, and lines. Every twenty feet along the floor, trap doors allow goods to be pulled directly into the building above. Serving as the main trade house of the city, the Nine Bells is the heart of Skullport's rebuilding economy. Within it, local merchants and visiting sailors haggle over the price of items as slaves haul them up off the docks. Deeper in the building, Skulkers purchase items from rows of market stalls. The supply of goods in the Nine Bells is unpredictable and changes daily. Nearly anything is available, though many items still bear bloodstains after having been procured from their original owners. Potential guides stand against the walls, competing to sell their services to affluent newcomers who come in search of mithral, and beggars from the Dredge are always in search of coin. Walking through the Nine Bells is less like a visit to the market and more like walking through a constant brawl—albeit one where the brawlers occasionally try to sell you something.

The enigmatic Fray have a tattered tent in the Nine Bells, where they take turns telling fortunes for the price of a meal. The true purpose of this operation is to keep a tally of magic users who visit Skullport so that the group can choose its victims.

### The Pick and Lantern

A ship's watch lantern and a miner's pick adorn the sign of this Venter drinking establishment, ostensibly signifying that the two largest groups of Skullport—the sailors and the skulldiggers—are equally welcome within it. Although the Pick and Lantern is not the largest tavern in the city, it is among the most successful. Inside, pirates, traders, and Skulkers of every stripe gather around tables made of cast-off water barrels and ship's wheels to argue, gamble, and, most important, drink. The walls are papered with nautical charts and maps of various mining stakes around Skullport, and each is modified by the patrons with rough charcoal notes to point out hazardous routes, cave-ins, or interesting landmarks. Whenever guides bring travelers from Downshadow above, their first round of drinks is free, provided they first mark the route they traveled and the sites of any encounters they had along the way. This constant influx of new information has turned the tavern into an invaluable resource. The walls of the tavern are so reliable that even the masters of groups such as the Mandible and the Reforged Ring refer to them regularly.

The tavern's owner, a dwarf named Wilgold Gunderbradt, operates the Sullied Crown, a three-story flophouse located behind the Pick and Lantern. Cots and meals are offered long term to Skullport's visitors for 5 gp a week, and, for 5 more, the guards on staff keep the lodgers safe from thieves while they sleep.

## The Dredge

The lowest level of Skullport, the Dredge, is a dank, lightless slum, dominated by hastily built lean-tos and the rubble of collapsed towers. The passage of slave teams each day churns the muddy streets, and the bellies of buildings overhead drip with noxious runnels of brightly colored mold. Encampments of the destitute and the misfortunate dot the Dredge, all surrounded by an artificial forest of creaking pilings that bear the crushing weight of the city above.

The people of the Dredge are made up of displaced Skulkers who were forced from their homes, skulldiggers who lost everything mining fruitless claims, and sailors marooned by their visiting ships. What little living they make is provided by feeding off the scraps of the rest of Skullport. Dredgefolk pan at the river's edge, hoping to gain even a small portion of the mithral harvested upriver, and by doing so, they also reclaim refuse brought to Skullport by the river. Skullport lacks any traditional means of waste disposal, and the people of the Venter and the Crown cast their garbage down to the Dredge, where its populace eagerly picks over anything of value.

### Kreel's Fishery

Other than the occasional scraps of food brought to the city in the hold of a visiting ship, or brightly covered fungus scraped from the cavern walls, everything the people of Skullport eat is pulled from the river. To meet the growing needs of the city, a small team of fishers has taken control of a section of the upriver dock. Built into the city behind it stands the edifice of Kreel's Fishery, a huddle of small and medium-sized shacks linked by rope walkways. Inside, the daily catch is cut, processed, and sold to the markets of Skullport. The owners, a pair of halfling Skulkers named Orrin and Beldane Kreelside, personally check each shipment. If any poisonous fish make it to market, the subsequent deaths might be

enough bring the Skulls to their door, a fate the brothers would rather avoid.

It is a well-known fact that the Riverside brothers are barely keeping ahead of Skullport's demand for food. Even a single day of bad fishing results in the city going hungry and a potential starvation-fueled riot simmering. To guard against such an outcome, Orrin and Beldane have built storage vats behind the fishery and have been trying to create a fish supply to serve as a reserve. To date their efforts have been unsuccessful; each batch of fish they put into the vats fails to survive more than a week. This turn of events has prompted the brothers to offer a reward of 100 gp to anyone who can determine why the fish are dying.

### Scupperden

Built from oiled sailcloth, rope, scavenged wood, and hope, Scupperden is the sole eatery of the Dredge. The single long room is filled with cheaply built, easily replaceable furniture, including several dozen tables. The serving line, a twenty-foot long trough, is manned by a half-dozen servers. Owned by a former ship's cook named Davon Graesus, Scupperden offers reasonably priced food to the city's poorest.

Scupperden serves only one item: a thick stew made from fish, mushrooms, and vegetable scraps purchased cheaply from visiting ships, and it is usually described as "alarming, but not likely to kill you." What Scupperden's fare lacks in quality, it more than makes up for in cost. A bowl of the stew costs only 1 cp, which is an attractive price to the poor Skulkers of the Dredge. Graesus learned firsthand the cruelty of starvation when the supplies of his ship went bad, so he has something of a soft spot for the unfortunate. He gathers up any unfinished bowls to distribute to luckless sailors and skulldiggers at the end of each day, free of charge. This generosity has earned him an extensive network of eyes and ears throughout the Dredge.

### The Grand Hoist

A rat's nest of gears, winches, and chain, the Grand Hoist is proving to be the most expensive blunder in the history of the Port of Shadow. Manufactured from parts recovered from the original hoist of Skullport, it was devised by a former head of the Mandible as a means of transporting goods to Waterdeep without having to pay pirates for safe transport or to rely on the dangerous routes through Undermountain. Two teams began digging vertical tunnels, one starting in Downshadow and the other in Skullport, hoping to meet in the middle. Ideally, the Grand Hoist could move a constant stream of goods back and forth between Waterdeep and the Port of Shadow. In actuality, the Grand Hoist project has been a long string of disasters and failures that have bankrupted nearly every investor who has backed it, and it has led to the Mandible forcibly ejecting its leader in favor of new blood.

This failure is partly the fault of the project. Getting new building material into Skullport is difficult and expensive, and the reclaimed wood and iron used to build the hoist is prone to failure, usually at the most disastrous times. Second, the Lowfellows have taken on the sabotaging of the Grand Hoist as something of a pet project, reveling in each significant failure, and they reward anyone else who does the same.

Construction of the Grand Hoist continues, albeit at a significantly reduced pace. The Mandible has recently begun to wise up to the efforts of the Lowfellows and is hiring new workers and guards in an effort to see the project to fruition. Parchments offering work on the Grand Hoist litter the street posts and alleys of every occupied street in the Venter.

### The Threads

North of the main cavern, a twisted maze of tunnels winds through the rocks. Several of them are left over from the early days of Skullport, but most are still being excavated by frenetic skulldiggers in their search for riches. Tons of rock is being hauled from the ruins of the main cavern and tunnels by Ring slaves, who carelessly dump it into the Sargauth by the wheelbarrow load. Once a tunnel is uncovered, skulldiggers work it day and night in hopes of finding mithral or a Netherese artifact.

Each major tunnel has a name—usually a colorful one such as Old Worthless or Rotten Luck, due to the grim gallows humor that many skulldiggers share. Other tunnels and caverns, yet to be explored, wind through the region, waiting for a skulldigger and his or her slaves to break into them and uncover the treasure, and danger, that Skullport still has to offer.

## Denizens

For the first time in generations, Skullport can boast a growing population, though that population is among the strangest in all of Undermountain. It is as if the worst chaff of the world were swept together in one place, where they struggle each day to survive in the sunless tomb they now call home. A lucky few have thrived in the rebuilding of Port of Shadow, but none do so without suffering for the effort.

### Korriben Nysel

Korriben is the halfling manager of the Old Knave, a tiny gambling den in the Dredge. Korriben's friendly personality is a strange counterpoint to the vicious scars running down his face and arms. When he arrived in Skullport, Korriben was one of the many slaves working at Beggar's Rest, a now infamously dangerous mithral mine. A partial collapse of the mine killed dozens of Korriben's fellow slaves and severely injured him. No longer useful to his owner, Korriben was dumped in the Sargauth to die. Fortunately for him, a Dredge angler recovered him from the river and nursed him back to health.

Korriben is a renowned hedonist, indulging in the many pleasures that were denied to him during his time as a slave. The halfling will gladly pay for wines, imported foods, and fashionable garments, and he has collected an impressive array of clothing and jewelry. Once an item catches Korriben's eye, he stops at nothing to possess it, no matter the cost. If he is refused, Korriben's normally cheery personality disappears, replaced with vicious anger. He attacks those he can match in combat, and he hires Skulkers to ambush those he cannot.

This arrangement has led to Korriben channeling funds from the Old Knave into the Lowfellows, in a roundabout sort of way. He gives them a portion of each night's earnings, and they provide him with a band of eager thugs whenever he needs an interesting bauble recovered.

## Naren Dafyre

This dour human can trace his lineage back to one of Skullport's merchants from before the city's collapse, the original owner of the *Dragon's Tooth*. He currently sits on the Mandible council as a lesser lord, a fact that he resents deeply. Since the sword of office belonged to one of his ancestors, he has repeatedly argued that it should be his—a position that has yet to be seen favorably by the gang's other members.

Despite being a shrewd businessman, Naren was plagued by a desire to control the sword of his forefather, and through it the Mandible, and that compulsion pulled Naren away from his life in Waterdeep. Since arriving in Skullport, he has steadily clawed his way up the ranks of the group, with outright leadership being his ultimate goal.

Naren controls several small businesses throughout Skullport, and his desire for power is matched only by his love of money. Naren will enter into any deal that will garner him a profit, regardless of the circumstances, and he is the only member of the Mandible who regularly consorts with the Lowfellows and Riverborn alike. No deal is too dangerous or unsavory for him as long as it puts coin in his coffers, and he has hired mercenaries and murderers to deal with his competition many times. Naren's employees are instructed to keep a look out for any newcomers to Skullport who seem capable of winning a fight, and he handsomely pays those willing to undermine his many rivals.

## Moriana Duskwalker

Moriana is a very unusual eladrin. She spent most of her life as a pirate captain, but when she first laid eyes on the damp, crumbling city of Skullport, she knew that she had found her home. She now sees herself as captain not of a ship, but of the city, and she acts to guide the city on a new course.

Like most of the pirates who have returned to Skullport, Moriana sees the mithral-mad skulldiggers as a necessary evil. Without them, there would be no rebuilding in Skullport, but she feels that they are seeking to change the city too much too fast. Unlike the Riverborn and the Lowfellows, who operate in secret, though, Moriana overtly works to keep the new Skulkers in check.

At different times, she has sat at the head of the Mandible, held majority ownership of Crookspar Parlor, and been a popular investor in Kreel's Fishery. No matter what position she holds, the pirate makes confusing, sometimes impossible demands of her underlings, always seeking to undermine the interests of Skullport's land-loving population. In a now-famous act of belligerence, Moriana purchased nearly half of the slaves owned by the Reforged Ring, only to set them free on the streets of the Crown with the instruction to "do a little damage." Entire swaths of the city were consumed by fighting before the Skulls could reestablish order.

Among the people of the Dredge, Moriana is something of a folk hero. Many times crews under her hire have raided merchant-owned ships headed away from Skullport, only to bring their goods back to the city for Moriana to distribute freely among the city's poorest.

Naren Dafyre and Moriana are longtime rivals. She sees in the human a mirror of everything she is trying to excise from Skullport, and her preponderance for instilling chaos frequently interferes with his carefully laid business plans.

## The Blind

The pitiful beholder known as the Blind is staggeringly old, his eyes clouded with thick cataracts. Weakened from centuries spent in the lowest levels of Skullport, he claims to be the Eye, a notorious criminal lord from the Port of Shadow's past. This claim seems unlikely, since the Eye is known to have been killed by the lich Avaereene, but the blind beholder maintains that, although he was severely injured, his death was merely a ruse to throw off his rival. True or not, the Blind commands an encyclopedic knowledge of Skullport's past.

Unable to command the respect of a gang, the Blind serves as a consultant and an intermediary between Skullport's factions. Many of the gang boundaries were finalized at meetings where the Blind sat as adjudicator, and although he cannot personally enforce rulings he makes, he commands enough respect in the city that his judgments are maintained.

The Blind is searching for a relic from Skullport's past, a crown once worn by one of the leaders of the Iron Ring. Called the *crown of horns*, it is a potent item said to contain the essence of the dead god Myrkul. When worn, it grants the wearer abilities akin to those of a lich. The Blind believes that possession of the crown will help restore him to his former power and secure his revenge against Avaereene. To obtain it, he hires anyone willing to search Skullport, promising fantastic rewards if they can find it for him. Rumor has it that the crown is currently in the

possession of the Murkstalker, a twisted creature said to hunt the shadows of the Dredge.

## The Murkstalker

Before the Spellplague, the Murkstalker was the yuan-ti Nhyris D'Hothek, a high-ranked member of the Iron Ring. Nhyris was best known for his ownership of the *crown of horns*, which transformed him from a common slaver into a powerful and terrifying creature.

Like the Blind and the fourteenth Skull, he is a holdover from Skullport's past who was warped by his time in the Port of Shadow. Where the Blind was twisted by age, and the fourteenth Skull changed by the power of the mantle, Nhyris was altered by the crown. When the Spellplague ripped across Skullport, it corrupted the *crown of horns*, warping Nhyris's body into an unrecognizable new form. At the same time, his mind underwent painful and permanent scarring, until Nhyris existed no more. In his place was a feral creature that knows only hunger and pain, mocked incessantly by the distorted voice of Myrkul coming from the crown that has fused permanently to his flesh.

For generations, the Murkstalker has hidden in the Dredge, selecting his prey from among the unwitting and unwary and dragging his victims to hidden tunnels where he can feed in safety. Much of the superstition of the Black Bell can be laid at the Murkstalker's twisted feet, and he is likely to blame for the failure of the fish-farming effort at Kreel's as well.

# Adventure Hooks

The following is a list of potential plot hooks to use for characters visiting Skullport.

**The Family Heirloom:** The son of a Waterdeep lord went missing while on a mining operation in the Threads. His family assumes him dead, but is desperate to recover a precious signet ring he was wearing when he went missing.

**Black Bell Watch:** Those hired to protect the Grand Hoist have been going missing during the Black Bell, and superstitious Skulkers are now refusing to take the job. The Mandible is willing to pay handsomely if anyone can stay alive through the Black Bell, thinking it will break the string of disappearances.

**Defrayed:** The Fray has singled out one of the characters to be its next sacrifice to the mantle. The heroes must thwart this effort, perhaps by diverting the Fray's attention to one of their adversaries.

**Deadliest Catch:** Rumor has it that someone has been poisoning the fish at Kreel's, and the heroes must identify the culprit.

**Mithral Madness:** A Skullport merchant is out to imprison the fourteenth Skull, believing it to be responsible for the mithral riches of Skullport and hoping it can recreate the bounty for him personally. The characters must stop the merchant before he harms the Skull and possibly endangers what little remains of the mantle.

**Fiscal Collapse:** A minor earthquake shakes the Threads, causing cave-ins. Working together with the people of Skullport, the heroes must free the trapped slaves and miners before they run out of air.

**Choppy Water:** A skulldigger lord has hired the party to help protect his barge as he transports a load of treasure downriver to safety outside Skullport. What he doesn't tell the characters is that his jilted partner has gathered a small navy of pirates and murderers to try to take it back.

*About the Author*

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# Blood Money

**A D&D® adventure for characters of levels 7-9**

*By Logan Bonner*

*Illustrations by Tyler Walpole, Tony Foti, and Jason Juta*

*Cartography by Sean Macdonald*

*". . . That's when you'll be creating a diversion by the northeast tower. Remember, it has to look magical. We want the scholar to take notice and come running.*

*"Once that door swings open, we have eighteen seconds until the Arcane Lock reactivates and seals it shut. We need to get inside that keep. That's where the treasure is, and that's what we need—a hoard that can build an army . . . and break it apart."*

## Introduction

"Blood Money" is a caper adventure in which the adventurers work outside the law to pull off a major robbery. Good planning is essential, and the characters need to stay cool under pressure.

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This Dungeons & Dragons® adventure is designed for characters of levels 7–9. The town of Elderwood, the despot Lord Tanlan, and his castle can be adapted for use in any campaign setting. The treasure can also be altered to better fit a specific setting.

## Adventure Background

Breyart Tanlan inherited a fortune, then made that fortune even larger through shady mercantile deals. In recent years, he has dubbed himself a lord and hired a mercenary army to take over new lands in his name. Because of his oppressive taxes and tariffs, his fortune has grown even as the people of the villages and towns he controls have become destitute.

Lord Tanlan has established his newest castle near Elderwood, a town that has been beneath his notice so far. But now that Lord Tanlan has taken over other trade routes, more caravans come through Elderwood to avoid his tariffs and his thugs. This new commerce prompted Tanlan to pay attention to the place at last, and he has sent Elderwood's leaders an ultimatum: Concede to the lord's authority within three days, or he will seize Elderwood by force.

The largest of his mercenary companies, dubbed Hydra Company, is with him at the town of Toad's Hollow, cleaning up after a successful siege. When these mercenaries finish in Toad's Hollow, they will enter Elderwood and gain control of it one way or another.

Maintaining a large mercenary force has one major drawback, though. If there's no money, there's no army. So that he can easily pay his mercenaries during a campaign in Elderwood, Tanlan's hoard sits in a vault underneath his nearby castle. Several companies of mercenaries, as well as layers of physical and magical defenses, protect it. But if someone could locate the treasure and find a way to steal it, Tanlan's grip would be broken.

## Adventure Synopsis

When the adventurers first arrive in Elderwood, information is scant. It's clear that defeating the mercenaries in battle will be nearly impossible. The characters have to find another way to end the despot's reign, and the fortune he needs to pay his troops is an obvious weak point.

Over the three days before Tanlan's ultimatum takes effect, the adventurers can plan and investigate. Their activities might include talking to informants, visiting guilds in Elderwood, doing reconnaissance at the castle, preparing rituals or magic items, or anything else the players think might help them pull off this caper.

The DM sets up the actions of Lord Tanlan and his cronies in advance. In the second phase of the adventure, the heroes enact their plan and see how it conflicts with what Tanlan has planned. If the adventurers have set up an effective strategy and can think on their feet, they'll end up with a fortune in silver and the gratitude of the people under Tanlan's rule.

## A Caper Adventure

Instead of dungeon delving, characters on a caper investigate possibilities, set up plans, outsmart foes, take bold risks, and rob their enemies of resources. A successful caper can lead to a big payoff.

Taking on a caper also implies a certain kind of attitude. Characters need to be smart, since meeting most of the challenges with direct violence can lead only to failure. Making all the pieces fit takes cleverness and a little luck. The adventurers are outnumbered, but never outmatched. Their wits and expertise can see them through.

### Running the Adventure

To accentuate the feel of a caper, "Blood Money" flips the essential action. Adventurers often react to villains, trying to foil their plots or defend against their attacks. In a caper, the adventurers drive the action against adversaries who spend much of their time reacting to the characters' actions.

This adventure requires you, first and foremost, to familiarize yourself with the entire adventure contents: the opening scene, the plot, Lord Tanlan's forces, Elderwood and potential character resources (factions, shops, information and rumors, and informants), and Lord Tanlan's castle, keep, and vault. Running the adventure is easiest if you have a good handle on the resources you have as well as those the characters might gain.

**Plot:** After you're familiar with the adventure contents, you'll create a plot. To do so, you'll spend plot points to determine how effective the opposition initially is. You'll gain and spend more plot points during play, so don't start out by setting up any of the opposition to be fully ready for the characters' final assault. Instead, add unexpected elements to the caper, or change up the story as it progresses when it makes sense to do so. The initial plot and how it evolves can be different every time, so "Blood Money" can be a new adventure each time it is played.

**Preparation:** After the opening scene of the adventure, the characters have opportunities over a few days to gather information, accumulate resources, and formulate their plans. As the characters prepare, you'll gain more plot points. If the characters bungle their preparations, you gain more plot points. You'll use these extra points to make adjustments to enemy plans or to throw extra complications into the mix when the party finally makes its move on Tanlan's vault.

**Execution:** When the characters are ready, or when they've run out of preparation time, the job begins. This part of the adventure plays out more like

a typical site-based adventure. The exception is that the characters try to avoid detection and escape with the treasure rather than confronting their enemies. All the parts of the plot and the characters' preparations are set in motion, and some of them are going to collide.

# Plot

Before you run this adventure, you need to create the plot, or the initial situation, for Lord Tanlan's forces. This section details how to figure out the schedules of the individuals and the mercenary companies in the despot's employ, as well as the defenses he has put into place.

## Plot Points

You have a resource called plot points that you spend to set up complications and to change the enemies' plans in reaction to the adventurers' actions. You start with 4 plot points to set up the initial scenario. As the adventurers plan and go through the adventure, you gain more points and the opportunities to spend them.

## Index Cards

You need to keep track of the different parts of the plan and when they take place. Index cards work well to organize the details of the caper. Having information handy on a card not only allows you to change it easily if you need to, but the cards serve other useful purposes, as you'll see. Label each card prominently at the top with a name you can use to refer to it. The process described below tells you how to use the cards and what else to put on them.

## Step A: Set Routines

The enemies and mercenary companies, described starting on page 7, each have a number of possible routines. These routines describe different strategies and actions that the enemies might adopt, each of which has a cost in plot points. Highly aggressive or thorough routines cost you plot points.

These routines have mechanical and/or narrative ramifications. Use the narrative aspects as guidelines for how the enemies act, making their behavior relevant to the adventurers. For instance, if Goblin Company goes into Elderwood to cause trouble, the characters should encounter them in a scene. The described routines can also serve as examples for new routines you might create for your version of the adventure.

### 1. Create Enemy and Company Cards

Create six cards, one for each enemy character: Lord Tanlan, Kamren, Gaheel, Olos, Thorsk, and Fermina. Write down any important information, such as the individual's attitude, motivation, vice, and possible routines. (Routines might change during play, so it's good to have other possible routines noted.)

Include the fact that Kamren, Olos, and Fermina have keys to the gate of the main keep, unless you want the characters to work harder for that information. In that case, determine how the characters can discover this fact.

Similarly, create cards for each of Tanlan's five mercenary companies: Hydra, Goblin, Manticore, Wolf, and Specter. Write down the company's commander, number of troops, typical duties, and possible routines.

### 2. Choose Enemy Routines

Pick up the enemy cards and assign each enemy a routine. Spend 1 or 2 plot points at this stage. If you spend 2 plot points, spread those points out between two enemies rather than bringing one enemy up to the highest-cost routine. On the enemy's card, indicate the routine you've chosen for that enemy and the associated difficulty.

You should now have six enemy cards with routines. Set them aside.

### 3. Choose Company Routines

Pick up the mercenary company cards and assign routines to them. Since each company falls under the command of an enemy character, what the leaders are doing should influence what you pick for the company's routine. For example, if Thorsk heads into Elderwood to look for trouble, Goblin Company might also go to Elderwood to cause some trouble. Spend your remaining plot points in this step. On the company's card, indicate the routine you've chosen and the associated difficulty.

You should now have five mercenary company cards with routines. Set them aside.

## Step B: Informants

The characters have access to plenty of information regarding Lord Tanlan, his underlings, and their plans. The informants in this adventure are a filter between the characters and the truth. Some informants are genuinely helpful, but others are disloyal to Elderwood.

To assign information to particular people, start by looking at the informants, starting on page 13, then decide what their true loyalties are. You might also want one of them to be trustworthy but incompetent.

### 1. Create Specifics

Create cards for specific information. Here are some cards you should include.

- Churg, an ogre in Goblin Company, lives in the castle's old temple.
- The main keep where Tanlan resides has a magically defended gate that requires a key and a password to open. See the "Password Clues" sidebar.

- The castle has a cavern under it, with an entrance behind the waterfall where a small river flows over the cliff (area 2 on the castle map).
- Olos and members of Specter Company come and go from the keep without being seen. This statement hints at the existence of the secret tunnel (area 6 on the castle map).
- Tanlan's vault is hidden beneath the inner keep, and it can be accessed through a secret entrance in his study. This information is likely to be available only from Tolo or Lymeris, and asking for it is sure to arouse suspicion.

You might also add a card hinting that the mercenaries carry freshly minted silver coins bearing Tanlan's seal. This fact could lead the characters to discover the nature of Tanlan's hoard before the caper. Alternatively, if you want the adventurers to work harder for that information, determine how they might find this out. For example, they might have to somehow acquire a few coins.

### 2. Remove Information

Pull four cards from your stack. Removing information in this way reflects that the informants cannot and do not know everything. Alternatively, you can remove information the adventurers can find out through reconnaissance, such as the cliff cavern or the secret tunnel to Specter Company's barracks. You can add a pulled card to an informant's stack later if you decide an informant has heard the news or learned something new.

### 3. Add Scheduled Events

Scheduled events, described on page 5, always appear among the points of information characters can learn. Make cards for all three events and add them to your stack.

### 4. Assign Information to Informants

Divide the information cards you have among the informants. Note which information an informant knows by writing down the card names under the informant's name. Then, choose four pieces of information and assign each of them to another informant, indicating information that is widely known. Company routines and scheduled events are good candidates for this duplicate information.

## Step C: Using the Cards

Separate the information cards from the enemy cards and the company cards, keeping three stacks for ease of use. When you're running the adventure, use the cards as reference to help determine enemy actions. Update an enemy card or a company card whenever you change its routine.

### PASSWORD CLUES

Opening the entry to Tanlan's central keep (area 21) within the castle requires a key and a password. This password is set to the name of the place Tanlan is currently attempting to conquer, and it is changed to a new target when he returns victorious. Look for places in the adventure to plant clues to the password so as to avoid stating it outright. For example, "Name the newest front in the lord's war to gain passage to the heart of his empire," or "On Tanlan's return, the word of passage will progress to 'Elderwood,' the next stage of the battle."

You can deliver this clue in several ways. Beles, the oracle of the Bough Shrine, could see it in a vision. Fermina might keep it written down as a reminder. Olos might have it among his collection of secrets.

# Preparation

During this stage of play, the adventurers come to Elderwood. They must gather information regarding Tanlan's forces and the castle, recruit people in Elderwood to help, and otherwise prepare to run the caper.

## Arrival in Elderwood

The adventurers receive a message from Elderwood asking for help. On their arrival, they find a town on the brink of destitution. People barely scraping by are in danger of losing more of their livelihood and independence. The mayor, Sovald Desmeer (page 10), imparts the information detailed in the "Adventure Background" section and below.

Lord Tanlan and Hydra Company are three days away in Toad's Hollow, but will be mobilizing soon. Their forces are too large to take on in combat, and Tanlan has issued a standing order that any town that resists his forces will be pillaged in retaliation. When the despot arrives, Elderwood must surrender or face attack. Tanlan's castle is a few hours away, and that's where he keeps the hoard of treasure that funds his mercenary army.

The mayor gives the adventurers room and board at the Coughing Banshee Inn, along with a place to meet in the inn's secret back room. He provides a map of Tanlan's castle based on what he could see when he was once taken to the castle, cross-referenced with old maps of the location.

Mayor Desmeer also tells the characters that they have a guaranteed ally in Koda, the dwarf proprietor of the Potions and Poultices Alchemist's Shop. The merchant is deeply interested in getting rid of the mercenaries, who have been demanding protection money and ruining his business. He also fears that he'll be conscripted into Tanlan's service if the despot takes over Elderwood.

## Six Goals

Give the players this list of the different goals that will need to be achieved.

**1. Make it past the outer wall.**
**2. Reach the castle's inner keep.**
**3. Enter the inner keep.**
**4. Locate the vault.**
**5. Overcome the vault's defenses.**
**6. Escape with the treasure.**

The characters won't necessarily be able to plan ways to achieve these goals before getting into the castle, but they should be thinking about them.

This list is also a guide for how the stages of the caper unfold. Looking at the castle map, you can see that the six steps correspond to how the castle is physically divided: outside the walls, inside to the keep, underground to the vault, gaining access to the treasure, then getting back out again.

## Scenes

The preparation stage is divided into several scenes. Recruiting factions, performing reconnaissance, and preparing items for the caper typically take one scene each, during which the characters might divide their resources among several different activities. Each day has two scenes, day and night. The table here shows the scenes, along with scheduled events.

**SCENES**

| Day | Scene | Notes |
|---|---|---|
| Day 1 | Day | Adventurers arrive |
| | Night | – |
| Day 2 | Day | Weekly fox hunt |
| | Night | Troop inspection |
| Day 3 | Day | Food delivery |
| | Night | Time for the caper! |

After the day scene on day 3 ends, preparation time is over. It's time for the caper. The characters can attempt to pull off the caper earlier. They might not be as well prepared, but it's their call.

### Scheduled Events

As noted above, certain events are set to occur in particular scenes. As described here, these events give you information to seed into discussions the adventurers might have with informants and enemies.

**Weekly Fox Hunt:** On the morning of day 2, four members from each of Wolf, Manticore, and Goblin companies gather outside the castle to compete in a fox hunt in the nearby woods. The winning company takes the Bronze Mace (an old, rotting mace with a head cast from bronze) to its quarters as a trophy. Wolf Company currently holds this trophy, and that group wins the hunt three times out of four. The hunters spread out in small groups throughout the woods, and the castle is less well guarded during this time.

**Troop Inspection:** At sunset on day 2, the troops gather in the castle courtyard, carrying torches. The company leaders inspect their troops to ensure that things are in order before the arrival of Hydra Company. The guards are away from their posts at this time, but the number of troops gathered in the courtyard—and their diligence during inspection—makes it more difficult than usual to enter the castle. However, this mass gathering does make it easy to count the troops, and any mercenaries who are absent or worse for wear (most likely because of previous interactions with the heroes) will stand out.

**Food Delivery:** On the morning of day 3, a cart full of food and supplies arrives at the castle. Similar shipments arrive every week, but this one is larger than usual to prepare for the arrival of Hydra Company. Two burly farmers from town, Aidan and Forsh, usually deliver and unload the shipment, but they might be looking to hire more help for this delivery. This is one of the few occasions when the mercenaries allow outsiders into the castle grounds.

### Running Scenes

At the start of a scene, ask each player what his or her character intends to do. Let the players throw ideas back and forth for a bit before locking them into a course of action. Then take turns playing out each scene. Switching the action back and forth as a scene unfolds is a great way to see what's going on in different places and keep things interesting for the players.

When each scene ends, you gain plot points and can alter enemy routines, as described in "Plot Point Phases" below.

**Dramatic Scenes:** Assume the adventurers can collect basic information with little effort. Whenever it seems like the characters should learn something based on their actions, provide that information as you see fit. Be sure to hold enough information back that the adventurers have a reason to engage in several scenes.

Use scenes for events that are important and dramatic. Spending a night crafting a new illusion to distract the guards at the castle is a scene. Buying the crystal needed to focus that illusion is just a quick question-and-answer session at the table.

Scenes based around recruiting factions already include challenges for the characters. Structure the talks with informants to make them interesting, with rare information requiring hard negotiation to obtain.

Scenes that bring adventurers into contact with Tanlan's forces should be tense, since the mercenaries are suspicious of newcomers. The adventurers should interact with the enemy, but for the mercenaries, combat is a last resort. Give the characters a chance to back down, hide, or talk their way out of a situation before you call for initiative.

## Plot Point Phases

After each day or night scene the adventurers go through, you gain 1 plot point to spend. If the adventurers bungle something or tip their hand in any way (for example, sharing too much with an informant not loyal to Elderwood), you gain 2 plot points instead. You can spend these points right away or save them. (It's advisable to save half and spend half.) Decide when to use plot points based on the story. If you don't react to something the adventurers do, they'll assume that their efforts are successful. If you do react, that raises the tension for the characters, but it also forces the bad guys to spend resources. As such, they won't be as well prepared to deal with the caper when it's puled off.

**Routine Improvisation:** Feel free to come up with new routines for enemy characters if a course of action someone would logically take suggests itself. For example, if the adventurers poison the shipment of food headed for the castle, Olos the spymaster might study the poison to figure out the training or location of the person who made it.

*Cost:* Whenever you change a routine in this way, spend 1 plot point.

### PICKING FIGHTS

This adventure isn't meant to have a lot of combat, but it might come up. Statistics for the different mercenaries appear at the end of the adventure, but don't worry about creating balanced tactical encounters. A scuffle isn't the adventurers' biggest problem—their enemies sounding an alarm is. If poor planning or bad breaks result in a large number of enemies engaging the adventurers in combat, the caper is likely over. As such, try to keep play from getting to that point. Surrendering and allowing themselves to be imprisoned in the castle is an option the characters might decide on, and such a situation might lead to another way to pull off the caper.

## Downgrading Routines

The adventurers might react to new enemy routines by finding ways to undermine them. For instance, they could throw Olos off their trail, or influence Gaheel to keep drinking. If the characters are successful, you can drop routines back down to lower levels. Avoid spending plot points on the targeted character's or company's routines again. Let the players see the fruits of their work.

# Experience, Quests, and Rewards

Because of this adventure's unusual structure, experience isn't assigned based on encounters. Instead, the adventurers gain XP based on how successful they are during each scene. Give this XP out at the end of each session or after each scene, awarding full XP if most of the characters were successful in their caper preparation or execution, or half XP if they weren't.

| Day | Scene | XP | Half XP |
|---|---|---|---|
| Day 1 | Day | None | None |
| | Night | 2,000 | 1,000 |
| Day 2 | Day | 2,500 | 1,250 |
| | Night | 2,500 | 1,250 |
| Day 3 | Day | 3,000 | 1,500 |
| | Night | 4,000 | 2,000 |

## Quests

The adventurers undertake a level 9 major quest (400 XP per character) when they commit to protect Elderwood and break up Lord Tanlan's mercenary army. In addition, players can create minor quests based on how they intend to carry out parts of their plan. Such quests must have conditions that could lead to failure. For example, scouting out the castle from the woods to determine its layout and weaknesses isn't a good minor quest. Doing so without Lord Tanlan's forces catching the characters could be.

### ROLL WITH IT

Your caper is going to be more fun—and feel more like a caper—if the adventurers' ideas turn out to be good ideas. As such, be prepared to reward sharp thinking. If a player comes up with a clever plan to take out an enemy that inadvertently conflicts with the schedule you've set for that enemy, find a way to make it work.

Keep an eye on which plot elements the players latch onto. If they don't care about Wolf Company but are interested in Goblin Company, spend your plot points on Goblin Company to give it a more prominent role.

This adventure works best with a group that includes a rogue, an assassin, or some other sneaky, thieving character. If you're running it for a group without a character who's good at Thievery, you might need to rework the challenges in the vault. Look for ways to let the other characters take on those parts of the mission by adding additional magical barriers or some guardian monsters to fight.

## Treasure Rewards

Most of the treasure in this adventure comes from Tanlan's hoard. In addition, place magic items in the vault and other locations as you see fit. At the end of the adventure, the alchemist Koda might give additional magic to the characters in thanks.

## Adjusting DCs

Your main tool for running this adventure is a list of DCs that you can adjust up or down based on the adventurers' actions. The enemy routines and the description of the castle note which DC categories to use. If the characters are not level 7 to 9, use the DCs for their level (*Rules Compendium*, page 126).

| Level | Easy | Moderate | Hard |
|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | 11 | 16 | 23 |
| 8 | 12 | 16 | 24 |
| 9 | 12 | 17 | 25 |

If the adventurers approach a situation intelligently or have prepared well to tackle it, you might grant a +2 bonus to the checks or, in the case of remarkable success, decrease the DC's category. If they blunder in or reveal details of their plans, impose a -2 penalty or, in the case of a serious blunder, increase the DC's category. In the case of exceptionally good planning, you might decide to skip the roll altogether.

Calling on factions can alter the odds. For example, adventurers who recruit the Black Cat thieves' guild might call on the guild to provide a distraction or help them disguise themselves to sneak into the castle. You can modify appropriate checks accordingly.

## Lord Tanlan's Forces

Each of the characters and groups loyal to Lord Tanlan has its own associated traits and routines. The routines describe what the characters and companies do, and provide examples of ways that routines can be escalated by spending plot points. Each entry also includes DC categories for checks the characters make against that enemy, and shows how routines affect those checks. For example, the layabout warriors of Goblin Company provide only a minimal threat, so checks made against them normally use an easy DC. However, if they are assigned to guard the gates, they behave more competently, with checks made against them using a moderate DC.

Although fighting isn't the focus of this adventure, troop numbers serve to help you keep track of enemy forces if the characters happen to take any of them out.

## Lord Tanlan, the Despot

A tall human in his late forties, Lord Tanlan exudes confidence. Having expanded his fortune through savvy business dealings, he knows how to use money to get what he wants. His bribes, threats, and unfair deals have driven entire towns to poverty. Now he calls himself a lord, and he demands crushing taxes from the settlements he considers part of his fiefdom. Tanlan's mercenaries make sure his tariffs and laws are enforced, but he prefers to wield the threat of violence rather than the real thing.

**Attitude:** Imperious. Tanlan believes he has the power and knowledge to be a king, and he acts as if everyone owes him allegiance.

**Motivation:** Rule by any means necessary.

**Vice:** Ambition. Lord Tanlan will never stop as long as he has the means to meet his goal.

**Difficulty:** Tanlan is suspicious and thinks himself superior. When he arrives in the aftermath of the adventure, checks made against him use hard DCs.

**Routines:** Tanlan remains away at Toad's Hollow, then returns after the caper alongside Hydra Company. He remains under their protection at all times.

## Hydra Company

A large band of experienced mercenaries, Hydra Company forms the fighting backbone of Tanlan's forces. Although the smaller companies sometimes rotate into front-line duty or take over small villages, Hydra Company fights the big battles.

**Commander:** Kamren.

**Troops:** 28.

**Difficulty:** Hydra Company is the best of the best. When the company arrives in the aftermath of the adventure, checks made against it use hard DCs.

**Routines:** Hydra Company is set to return from Toad's Hollow in the aftermath of the caper, and so has no routines that affect the caper.

### Kamren, Mercenary Liaison and Commander

A rugged and wealthy middle-aged human female, Kamren calls the shots for Tanlan's mercenaries. She organizes their missions, negotiates their pay, and relays orders from the despot. Hydra Company reports directly to her.

**Attitude:** Practical. When Kamren gives orders, she expects them to be followed without question. She acts differently only around Tanlan, assuming an obsequious air in the presence of her employer.

**Motivation:** Get rich. Every job Kamren takes on with her mercenaries pays well. She cares only about the amount of money she'll make and the likelihood that the patron will actually pay.

**Vice:** Greedy. Kamren goes where the money is. If she hears a lead regarding lucrative work, she might take some time to follow up on it. She's not so hasty that she will break off a job in the middle of a contract, however.

**Difficulty:** Checks made against Kamren use moderate DCs, escalating to hard DCs if the task is difficult or Kamren has good reason to be alert or suspicious.

**Key:** Kamren carries a key to Tanlan's keep. She wears the triangular magic amulet around her neck. Lifting it off her requires a hard DC Thievery check.

**Routines:** Kamren starts out in Toad's Hollow with Tanlan and Hydra Company.

*Return Early (1):* Kamren travels back to the castle early to make sure things are in order for Tanlan's arrival. She brings two Hydra Company members in tow.

*Hasten the Deadline (2):* After Kamren returns, she decides to confront the mayor early, asking for Elderwood to concede to Tanlan's rule on the morning of the third day. The mayor caves and signs any compact he's forced to agree to, but this doesn't mean the game is up. Consider using this routine if the players develop a solid plan for the caper early on and have no need for further preparation.

## Manticore Company

The sharpshooters of Manticore Company stand guard atop the towers of the castle, keeping an eye on the forest and road. Armed with longbows, they are also in charge of operating Tanlan's catapults if the need arises.

**Commander:** Gaheel.

**Troops:** 12.

**Difficulty:** Checks made against Manticore Company use moderate DCs, escalating to hard DCs if the company's routine is improved to 1 or 2.

**Routines:** Members of Manticore Company take their reputation seriously and perform to the best of their ability. They have a reputation among the other mercenaries as dour and humorless professionals. Members of the company stand guard atop all the towers except the two by the front gate.

*Stand Guard (0):* The archers go about their routine duties, cycling through patrols on the guard towers. They occupy three of the five smaller towers at any given time.

*Close Watch (1):* On high alert, Manticore Company keeps watch from all five towers.

*On the Hunt (2):* If word of possible intruders spreads, the company tries to flush them out by sending regular patrols into the woods around the castle.

### Gaheel, Captain of the Watch

Gray-haired and disheveled, the half-elf Gaheel doesn't seem like an inspiring captain. His best days are behind him, and he doesn't hide it well.

**Attitude:** Scattered. Gaheel used to be a wise, dutiful captain, but he has become incompetent during his superiors' absence.

**Motivation:** Self-preservation. It's been a long time since Gaheel cared about his work or put real effort into it. He takes the path of least resistance and lowest risk.

**Vice:** Drunkard. Gaheel is often too inebriated to give orders or show up for duty. He's been trying to get back on track before Hydra Company returns.

**Difficulty:** Gaheel is pliable, and checks made against him use easy DCs until he gets his act together. If he goes on the wagon, use moderate DCs instead.

**Routines:** Gaheel does little work as he assigns tasks to the Wolf and Manticore companies. Technically, he's in charge of Thorsk and the Goblin Company also, but he rarely gives them orders.

*Drink (0):* After issuing standing orders to the companies under his command, Gaheel gets drunk. He stays in his chambers during the day and goes to the inn at night.

*Go on the Wagon (1):* Gaheel realizes he needs to put away the bottle. He whips the companies under his command into shape.

## Wolf Company

The members of Wolf Company were recruited from larger cities. All are masters of a signature dueling style and have been trained to identify charlatans and tricksters.

**Commander:** Gaheel.

**Troops:** 10.

**Difficulty:** The members of Wolf Company are diligent soldiers, but their assignment inside the castle gives them a false sense of security. Checks made against the company use moderate DCs, escalating to hard if the company's routine is improved to 1 or 2.

**Routines:** Wolf Company is charged with keeping track of mercenaries and workers who should be allowed into the castle. However, they can't maintain perfect records.

*Guard the Gates (0):* Wolf Company has its quarters in the gatehouse, and its members are in charge of guarding the front gate.

*Patrol the Grounds (1):* When any danger of infiltration is suspected, the Wolves stop people inside the castle and check their credentials.

*Guard the Keep (2):* If word comes of possible intruders in the castle, the Wolves stand guard at the inner keep's doors.

## Specter Company

These spies and assassins work alone, delivering information to Olos.

**Commander:** Olos.

**Troops:** 6.

**Difficulty:** The members of Specter Company are capable specialists, so checks made against them use moderate DCs. At routine level 2, checks made against the company use hard DCs.

**Routines:** Members of Specter Company receive their strategies from Olos. However, they make their own decisions and have plenty of latitude regarding how to tackle their assignments.

*Surveillance (0):* The Specters travel to and from town in disguise or under cover of night, looking for rumors.

*Follow a Lead (1):* The Specters follow leads regarding suspicious activity, either by the adventurers or factions allied with them.

*Assassination Attempt (2):* Enemies of Lord Tanlan have drawn Olos's attention, and he dispatches one or more Specters to take them out. (If an adventurer comes to the attention of the Specters, Olos takes care of it. See his entry below.)

### Olos the Spymaster

The wily halfling Olos has been a mercenary and a spy his entire life. His graying hair and the scar along his cheek are marks of his experience. The band of thieves and spies known as Specter Company follows his orders.

**Attitude:** Arrogant. Olos has seen every trick in the book, or so he thinks.

**Motivation:** Fulfill the company's contract. With the pay he earns from Tanlan, Olos plans to retire soon.

**Vice:** Gambling. There's a reason Olos hasn't retired yet. Whenever he gets close to having enough money, he bets too aggressively in a game of chance and is pushed back to square one.

**Difficulty:** Olos is sharp, so checks made against him use moderate DCs unless his suspicions are aroused. At routine levels 1 and 2, checks made against Olos use hard DCs.

**Key:** Olos has a key to Tanlan's keep, and he conceals the triangular magic amulet up his sleeve. He's an experienced thief, so lifting it off him requires a hard DC Thievery check.

**Routines:** Olos makes frequent late-night trips to the inns of Elderwood. Although he rarely drinks, he gambles late into the night.

*Desk Work (0):* Olos reads over Specter Company's reports and sends pertinent information to Lord Tanlan. He occasionally heads into town to gamble, since no one in the castle will give him credit anymore.

*Assignment in the Field (1):* Suspicious of recent activity, Olos travels to Elderwood to do some digging personally.

*Assassinate (2):* If Olos is aware of the adventurers and their agenda, he straps on his daggers and attempts to assassinate one of the characters.

## Goblin Company

Scruffy, unkempt, and ill-mannered is the standard description of the goons in Goblin Company. Kamren puts Thorsk and his soldiers in charge of harassing towns and guarding less important places.

**Commander:** Thorsk.

*From top: Gaheel, Fermina, and Olos*

**Troops:** 24, including the ogre mercenary Churg.

**Difficulty:** Goblin Company's members are shiftless thugs, and checks made against them use easy DCs. When they escalate to routine level 2, checks made against them use moderate DCs.

**Routines:** Since Goblin Company is known more for reckless tactics than a strong work ethic, it is rarely assigned a task of high importance, such as guarding the keep.

*Slack Off (0):* The members of the shiftless company sleep or play cards.

*Patrol Elderwood (1):* The Goblins take a trip to town to clamp down on dissent and engage in a little extortion.

*Guard the Castle Gates (2):* Drafted into service in response to warnings or threats, Goblin Company goes on gate guard duty at the keep's outer wall to prevent a frontal assault.

### Thorsk the Enforcer

Calling the shots for Goblin Company, the belligerent half-orc Thorsk is covered with scars from dozens of fights. Willfully devoid of pity or tact, his approach is completely opposite from Olos's, and the two have a well-known animosity and rivalry.

**Attitude:** Aggressive. Thorsk doesn't ask; he demands. His subordinates are beaten and terrified under his violent leadership.

**Motivation:** Battle. Thorsk loves to fight, and he chafes at being forced to do guard duty.

**Vice:** Fury. When his anger takes over, Thorsk can't be reasoned with. If he thinks he has been insulted or betrayed, he is quick to resort to violence.

**Difficulty:** Thorsk is most competent when direct confrontation is involved. Until he goes looking for trouble, checks made against him use easy DCs. Checks made against him use moderate DCs only after he escalates to routine level 1.

**Routines:** Thorsk is a rowdy thug. If he hasn't been given orders to fight, he carouses and causes trouble.

*Drink and Yell (0):* Thorsk sits back in the Goblin Company barracks, browbeating his subordinates and demanding that they bring him more beer.

*Look for Trouble (1):* Thorsk goes to Elderwood to look for a fight, whether with bar patrons or one of the local lumberjacks. Anyone who gets in his way or gives him attitude is in for a bruising.

## Fermina, the Arcane Scholar

When Tanlan needed a master of arcane rituals to secure the defenses of his vault, Kamren called on an ambitious young eladrin named Fermina. Not content to use the same spells and rituals that everyone else does, Fermina regularly comes up with new and inventive ways to combine and improve magic.

**Attitude:** Impatient. Fermina always seems as though she has somewhere else she'd rather be—at least until she runs into another practitioner of the arcane arts. In the company of any fellow spellcaster, she begins rattling off obscure facts and tricky questions, trying to learn as much as she can.

**Motivation:** Knowledge. Fermina's salary goes toward paying for expeditions, tomes, and study. She wants to expand her knowledge of arcane magic much more than she wants to be a mercenary.

**Vice:** Obsessive. Fermina has a thirst for knowledge regarding arcane lore, and she seeks out any phenomena or relics she hears rumors about. Sometimes she leaves her post or shirks her responsibilities to sate her curiosity.

**Difficulty:** Fermina is competent but easily distracted. Checks made against her use moderate DCs.

**Key:** Fermina has a key to Tanlan's keep, and she secures the triangular magic amulet in her coin pouch. The key can be stolen with a Thievery check, but a magical alarm guards it. A character who has training in Arcana senses the alarm automatically and can deactivate it with an Arcana check. The deactivation must be done quickly, however, or Fermina instantly detects the amulet's location if it is moved more than 20 feet from her.

**Routines:** Fermina's work is largely immaterial to this adventure. The heroes need to worry only about the defenses she has set up in the vault.

*Basic Defense (0):* Fermina has set up only a few defenses. Choose three defenses.

*Elite Defense (1):* Armed with new research, Fermina adds another barrier to protect the vault. Choose four defenses.

*Ultimate Defense (2):* With suspicious activity going on, Fermina burns the midnight oil to seal off the vault against intrusion. Choose five defenses.

# Elderwood

The town of Elderwood has never been a particularly important location. Its citizens are farmers, lumberjacks, and crafters.

## Government

Elderwood's citizens don't care about politics as long as the roads are maintained and goods are reasonably priced. An elected mayor makes the major decisions for the town, delegating a few tasks to subordinates.

### Mayor Sovald Desmeer

Sovald, a farmer by trade, is serving his second term as Elderwood's mayor. This gray-haired human is accustomed to dealing with minor squabbles, not with warmongers and mercenary armies. All he wants is peace, and he knows how badly Elderwood would fare in a direct attack.

## Factions

If the adventurers recruit members of a faction, the party can call on those characters for aid later on. They might be used to create a diversion, intercept messengers, distract spies, and so on. When the adventurers recruit a faction to their cause, give the players an index card representing that they now have that group to call on.

Don't give specific rules for these groups. Rather than acting as companion characters or bestowing specific bonuses, have the faction members function as the players dictate, possibly altering enemy routines or helping to bypass challenges the adventurers might face.

### Black Cat Thieves' Guild

The rakes in this guild prowl the nearby highways and steal from wealthy visitors to Elderwood, avoiding violence. Their presence in town is tolerated because they largely leave ordinary people alone. The

#### ENGAGING THE ADVENTURERS

The town of Elderwood contains locations to play off the types of characters found in a typical adventuring party. The Black Cat thieves' guild can draw in a rogue, while the Tunnel Sage Society serves as a point of interest for arcanists, and so forth. Try to nudge the players toward secondary characters that their adventurers might want to interact with.

If the party features unusual characters, change the organizations to make a better fit. The goal is for the players to feel as though each adventurer has a natural place to do a little investigating.

thieves know that Tanlan's presence in Elderwood will be bad for business.

**Recruiting:** A rogue or a character with a suitably shady backstory can recruit the thieves. The thieves have an initiation process, which requires a scene to complete. Any adventurer who goes through the trials earns the guild's trust and assistance.

The initiation goals must be completed in a way amenable to the thieves, meaning the character must tell no truths, spend no money, and remain undetected in stealth and falsehoods. An initiate needs to complete two goals to pass. Plans and distractions that you judge to be particularly clever can be completed quickly. If two goals are completed quickly, the initiate can attempt a third one for higher prestige.

*Bawdy Books:* The thieves have heard that some of the tomes in the Tunnel Library include pictures of demons, nymphs, and satyrs that are shockingly lascivious. The initiate needs to bring back one such book. This might involve the character taking on the guise of a scholar, breaking in late at night, or seducing a lonely arcanist for access.

*Nice Threads:* The initiate needs to collect a town guard's uniform without killing the guard or being implicated in the crime. Accomplishing this goal might involve engaging in a drinking contest, snagging laundry while it's being washed at the river, or tailoring a fake uniform.

*Strange Brew:* The adventurer must procure a bottle of exotic Lamia Lager from the Coughing Banshee Inn. Bertha doesn't leave her bar unattended for long, and she is resistant to trickery (moderate DC Bluff). The initiate also has to distract or con the other bar patrons to go unnoticed.

## Bough Shrine

A massive, bent tree on the edge of the forest was turned into a shrine ages ago. It was originally dedicated to worship of the primal spirits, but eventually incorporated icons and symbols of deities. The lumberjacks of Elderwood offer prayers to Melora before working in the woods. Townsfolk who are about to go on long journeys leave offerings for Avandra.

Beles, the rustic priest who maintains the shrine, is an oracle respected for her insights. Lord Tanlan has declared that he will bring in his own priests when he takes over—ones who will collect the tithes he demands.

**Recruiting:** A divine or primal character can recruit Beles by spending one scene engaging in a test of faith (described below). The mercenaries believe in Beles's oracular powers, and she is willing to trick Lord Tanlan's forces to protect her town and shrine.

*Seeing the Future:* Beles can peer into the future on behalf of the adventurers. Use this as a chance to foreshadow routines that have changed or betrayals by informants, and to hint at secrets of the castle (such as the password to the keep door, the hidden cavern, or the use of magic keys).

*Test of Faith:* Beles uses her oracular magic along with potions and special incense to perform a ritual. It mentally sends an adventurer back to a formative event in his or her past. This event could be one from early in life, but try to find a decision point that occurred in your campaign. Put the character back in that situation, and see whether he or she makes the same decision.

This is a test of character. The decision made is less important than the ability to make the decision and live with it. Changing a decision to do what's right is a valid option, as is sticking with the same decision to maintain the path that led the adventurer to Elderwood and the oracle. If the adventurer refuses to make the decision or tries to please Beles rather than doing what he or she considers right, the priest is unimpressed. Otherwise, Beles shows respect for the adventurer's strength of character and agrees to aid the party.

## Town Guard

The experienced combatants in Elderwood work part-time shifts in the town guard. The guards deal with the occasional barroom brawl or bandit attack, but only their de facto leader Olaf has experience in real warfare.

**Recruiting:** A trained warrior such as a fighter, a warlord, or a warden can recruit the town guard. They join the adventurers' cause only if they believe the character to be a capable warrior. This requires a one-on-one duel between the recruiter and Olaf until one of the combatants becomes bloodied. (Use Olaf's statistics block, on the following page, to resolve the duel.) Allies can provide no assistance. If the character loses but makes a good showing, the guards can be convinced to aid the party with moderate DC Diplomacy checks, as long as the adventurers show respect and good character.

## Tunnel Sage Society

A small club of arcanists meets in the Tunnel Library, a storehouse in an underground room beneath the alchemy shop. Koda the alchemist is the club's founding member. The club has been gathering scrolls and ritual books for over a decade, and its members have all learned a bit of arcane magic from Koda. No one in the club has the skill level of an adventurer, however.

Recently, Fermina disrupted one of the club's meetings and demanded to look through the members' research. Armed mercenaries kicked the members out while Fermina spent a day in their library. The library members are now anxious to get back at her.

**Recruiting:** The library members can't be recruited as such, but an adventurer skilled in magic can spend a scene researching with them. This provides an idea of what Fermina was looking for, and allows the adventurer to come up with countermeasures to the magical defenses placed in Tanlan's vault.

| **Olaf, Dwarf Guard Leader** | **Level 9 Brute** |
|---|---|
| Medium natural humanoid | XP 400 |
| **HP** 120; **Bloodied** 60 | **Initiative** +5 |
| **AC** 21, **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 20 | **Perception** +7 |
| **Speed** 5 | Low-light vision |
| **Traits** | |
| **Stand the Ground** | |
| Olaf can move 1 square fewer than the effect specifies when subjected to a push, a pull, or a slide. | |
| **Steady-Footed** | |
| Olaf can make a saving throw to avoid falling prone when an attack would knock him prone. | |
| **Standard Actions** | |
| ⊕ **Maul** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will** | |
| *Attack:* Melee 1 (one creature); +14 vs. AC | |
| *Hit:* 4d6 + 8 damage. | |
| **Minor Actions** | |
| ⸸ **Spiked Headbutt** (weapon) ✦ **Recharge** when Olaf ends his turn having dealt no damage to an enemy | |
| *Attack:* Melee 1 (one creature); +14 vs. AC | |
| *Hit:* 1d6 + 4 damage, and ongoing 5 damage (save ends). | |
| **Triggered Actions** | |
| ⸸ **Hammer Back** (weapon) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞ | |
| *Trigger:* Olaf hits with *maul* during his turn. | |
| *Effect (No Action):* Olaf also pushes the target up to 4 squares and knocks it prone. | |
| **Arrow Bane** ✦ **Recharge** when first bloodied | |
| *Trigger:* An enemy within 5 squares of Olaf hits him with a ranged or area attack. | |
| *Effect (Immediate Reaction):* Olaf moves up to his speed to a square adjacent to the triggering enemy, and then uses *maul* against it. | |
| **Str** 19 (+8) **Dex** 13 (+5) **Wis** 16 (+7) | |
| **Con** 20 (+9) **Int** 10 (+4) **Cha** 12 (+5) | |
| **Alignment** good **Languages** Common, Dwarven | |
| **Equipment** chainmail, maul, spiked helmet | |

Based on roleplaying or success on a moderate DC Arcana check, provide hints regarding one or more of the vault's defenses.

# Informants

Three people living in Elderwood can provide reliable information regarding the goings-on in Tanlan's castle. Collecting information from an informant takes one scene, requires negotiation, and doing so is likely to involve a bribe.

When you roleplay an informant, refer to the relevant cards to guide your conversation. You can alter or conceal information if the informant has a reason to mislead the characters. For future reference, note whether the information you gave out was complete and, if not, what was left out or falsified.

**Bribe:** The bribe an informant requires is a flat fee per piece of information (per index card, in other words) if the characters questioning the informant fail to negotiate. A successful moderate DC check using interaction skills lowers the fee by twenty-five percent, while a successful hard DC check lowers the price by fifty percent.

You can grant bonuses or automatic successes for clever roleplaying or sharp skill use. The adventurers might offer a share of the loot or convince an informant that it's in his or her best interest to spill the beans. A character can use History to reminisce about old campaigns with Tolo, or use Nature to discuss the character of the spirit world with Sasha. Characters can also find alternatives to paying gold. Sasha might accept an old primal talisman, or Lymeris might help them in return for arcane teaching or an arcane item.

If the characters are particularly good at dealing with an informant who is disloyal to Elderwood, you might decide that the informant turns his or her sympathies to the adventurers' mission.

## Tolo Redfoot

A few years ago, this halfling was in charge of Hydra Company. Living off his profits from that job, he spends his days and nights sleeping and carousing in the inn. He meets up with old friends from Tanlan's forces from time to time, and they sometimes let information slip. He is most likely to have facts regarding troop assignments and the habits of the mercenary leaders.

**Bribe:** 50 gp.

**If Loyal to Elderwood:** Tolo might have old friends in Tanlan's ranks, but he doesn't agree with the despot's policies. He has no qualms about preventing the tyrant from taking over Elderwood.

**If Not:** Tolo doesn't want his friends to end up out of work. In fact, he's angling to acquire a position of power in Elderwood when Tanlan takes over.

## Sasha Wingspeaker

A primal spiritualist, the half-elf Sasha lives in the woods. She is currently in town to recover from a bear attack, so her close friend Beles is taking care of her at the Bough Shrine. Sasha uses primal magic to communicate with animals, primarily birds. Through them, she knows the layout of the castle and has seen troop movements.

**Bribe:** 60 gp.

**If Loyal to Elderwood:** In Sasha's view, the frontier town is merely a minor blight on the forest if left to its own devices. She knows that the greedy lord in his castle of stone will do far worse than a bit of logging.

**If Not:** Sasha thinks that both Elderwood and Tanlan's castle need to be returned to nature. She wants to allow Tanlan to ruin the town before assassinating him.

## Lymeris Regantilla

A former apprentice of Fermina, the eladrin Lymeris was unceremoniously cast out of Fermina's service a month ago. Rumors say he refused to collect questionable ritual components that Fermina asked for, possibly human blood. His pay barely covered his debts, so he's been stuck in Elderwood performing minor rituals to save enough money to join a caravan. Lymeris knows about some of the defenses Fermina has placed on the vault.

**Bribe:** 80 gp.

**If Loyal to Elderwood:** Lymeris eagerly sells out his old employers for the gold that will let him high-tail it out of Elderwood.

**If Not:** Even though Fermina cast him out, Lymeris is desperate to get back into Fermina's good graces. If taken into the adventurers' confidence, he passes on their plans to Fermina and the troops at the castle.

## Shops

Elderwood contains the usual shops found in a town of its size. Any basic nonmagical gear can be found and purchased here. Specific shops detailed below provide resources that might be helpful during this caper.

### Potions and Poultices Alchemist's Shop

The dwarf Koda provides the adventurers with magic items and rituals worth up to 10,000 gp from his stores. If the characters want to borrow more, a successful moderate DC Diplomacy check convinces Koda to double his monetary limit on loaner items. However, he worries that if the characters carry too many of his items, he'll be in trouble if the heroes are caught.

Koda expects any loaned items back at the end of the caper, unless the characters use the spoils to buy them or you decide to make them part of the reward.

The adventurers can also buy any items they can afford, and Koda is willing to trade items on a normal value basis. If the characters buy or trade for items, Koda has plausible deniability if the adventurers fail and Tanlan comes looking for the source of their magic.

**Available Rituals:** Detect Secret Doors (125 gp), Detect Treasure (800 gp), Knock (175 gp), Silence (75 gp), Tenser's Floating Disk (50 gp), Wizard's Sight (680 gp).

**Available Magic Items:** *bag of holding* (1,000 gp), *darkskull* (4,200 gp), *dust of arcane insight* (3,400 gp), *elixir of invisibility* (level 6, 75 gp), *enshrouding candle* (2,600 gp), *five potions of healing* (50 gp each), *sending stones* (9,000 gp), *spymaster's quill* (5,000 gp).

### The Coughing Banshee Inn

This inn has seven small rooms plus a cleverly concealed back room behind the chimney. The inn sees all kinds of clientele, from poor farmers to Tanlan's mercenaries. The innkeeper, Bertha Hamish, brings in kegs of exotic beverages from traders and brews her own ale, Elderwood Stout.

**Listening In:** An adventurer can spend a scene sitting in the inn, listening to conversations in the hope of hearing good information. In this scenario, include one of the enemy characters or a member of one of the mercenary companies, and relay a piece of information that character would know, as well as any basic information you'd like to give the adventurers.

# Execution

Whether the adventurers think they're ready or have simply run out of time, they have the vault in their sights as they make their run at the castle.

## A Solid Plan

Before the characters travel to the castle, make sure the players have worked out a clear plan to face anything they know about. Give them time to nail down the final details if they're not all on the same page, and have them write down each stage of their mission. No plan survives contact with the enemy, and they might not know all the details even at this point, but it's good for the players to have an overall direction in mind.

## Player Tool: Contingency Plans

When the caper begins, each player has one contingency plan available. Use a token of some sort to represent the plan. Think of a contingency plan as something the character thought of that the player didn't. Just as you gain plot points so that you can set up a proper defense, the players have contingency plans so they don't get stuck.

At any point during the caper, a player can spend his or her contingency plan token to prepare a character for a situation as it arises. The preparation should tie in to the type of character. For example, a druid might bring a small bird that can fly over pressure plates to activate a switch. A wizard could reveal that she previously traded for the Tenser's Floating Disk ritual at the alchemy shop, in reaction to realizing that the loot in the vault can't be carried out by hand.

## DM Tool: Plot Points

You should still have plot points left over from the preparation stage. You can spend these during the caper to change routines, but such changes won't always fit in with the faster action. Most of the time, you should spend these points when things are going well for the adventurers. Did they make it into the keep without difficulty? Maybe that's because some of Goblin Company's members are in Tanlan's residence stealing the despot's fine liquor. Are the adventurers making their way out with the treasure? Too bad Fermina set up an alarm ward to detect massive amounts of silver leaving the castle.

**Cost:** You spend 1 plot point to change a routine or the action of a group or an enemy in this way. Be careful, though. You want to challenge the adventurers, but you don't want to counter every one of their successes with a setback.

## Stages of the Caper

Remember the list of six goals from page 5? Have it handy so you and the players know the order of the action.

## Checks and Conflicts

Many of the adventurers' actions in the castle will come down to skill checks. Do the disguised heroes successfully bluff the guards at the gate? Can they open the lock at the main keep gates and use the password quickly enough to not get caught? For most situations, an adventurer makes a check against the DC indicated in the information given for an enemy or company. Enemies make checks only rarely, and these are usually opposed checks made against a character.

Whenever the adventurers are traveling in a group, they could need to make group checks (*Rules Compendium*, page 128) to accomplish tasks. Encourage clever strategies and adjustments to play to deal with difficult group checks. If the players come up with a cool idea, lower the DC or grant an automatic success.

For example, three adventurers might choose to cross the moat near the northeast castle tower. Manticore Company is in the Stand Guard routine, occupying the northeast tower and two others. Each adventurer attempts a DC 16 Stealth check while splashing through the moat. If two or three of them succeed, they're okay. If not, Manticore Company becomes suspicious. The company might go to the Close Watch routine or call on another company to check out the disturbance.

## Aftermath

What happens if the adventurers succeed? Whether the characters remain in Elderwood or hear about the repercussions of their caper only afterward, skip ahead in time and play out the consequences.

The broad strokes of the story are the same. Tanlan shows up, finds his vault empty, and realizes he has a bunch of mercenaries that he can't pay. The mercenaries loot the castle to recoup some of their losses, then hit the road. Tanlan plans to flee to another of his holdings, but Elderwood guards nab him when the mercenaries clear out. The mercenaries travel through the other towns and villages under Tanlan's control, pulling out the warriors stationed there.

Adjust the details to reflect what happened during the caper. If the adventurers pretended to be people they weren't, those characters show up in the legend of how Tanlan fell. If they stole supplies or left valuables behind, make those details significant.

Also try to find ways to involve the adventurers in the conclusion. If they remain nearby to observe, have Tanlan make a run for it so the party can help the town guard catch him. If the adventurers are far away, have a few Goblin Company mercenaries show up at the same location, looking for work.

Alternatively, Tanlan could escape to hound the characters in other adventures. You can also turn the jobless mercenaries into foes in upcoming scenarios. This can be especially fun if the characters developed a specific animosity for a company or its leader.

### SLOW PLAY

If a plan goes awry and the group needs to change course, the players might get bogged down in exploring every possible course of action rather than just picking one. Long planning sessions aren't bad in the early stages, but if the characters need to make a quick decision, so do the players. If the players are spending a long time deciding what to do next, give them a couple of minutes of warning. If they use up that time, you gain 1 plot point and should spend it on an enemy routine that can help force the players to action.

### The Money

The adventurers are free to keep the treasure, but they might also consider donating a large portion to the people of Elderwood and the other local settlements impoverished by Tanlan. In reaction, the locals are so grateful that they hand over ownership of a recently vacated stronghold in the area. Alternatively, the characters might decide to hire the mercenaries themselves, or to take care of business from another part of the campaign that a pile of cash can solve.

# The Castle

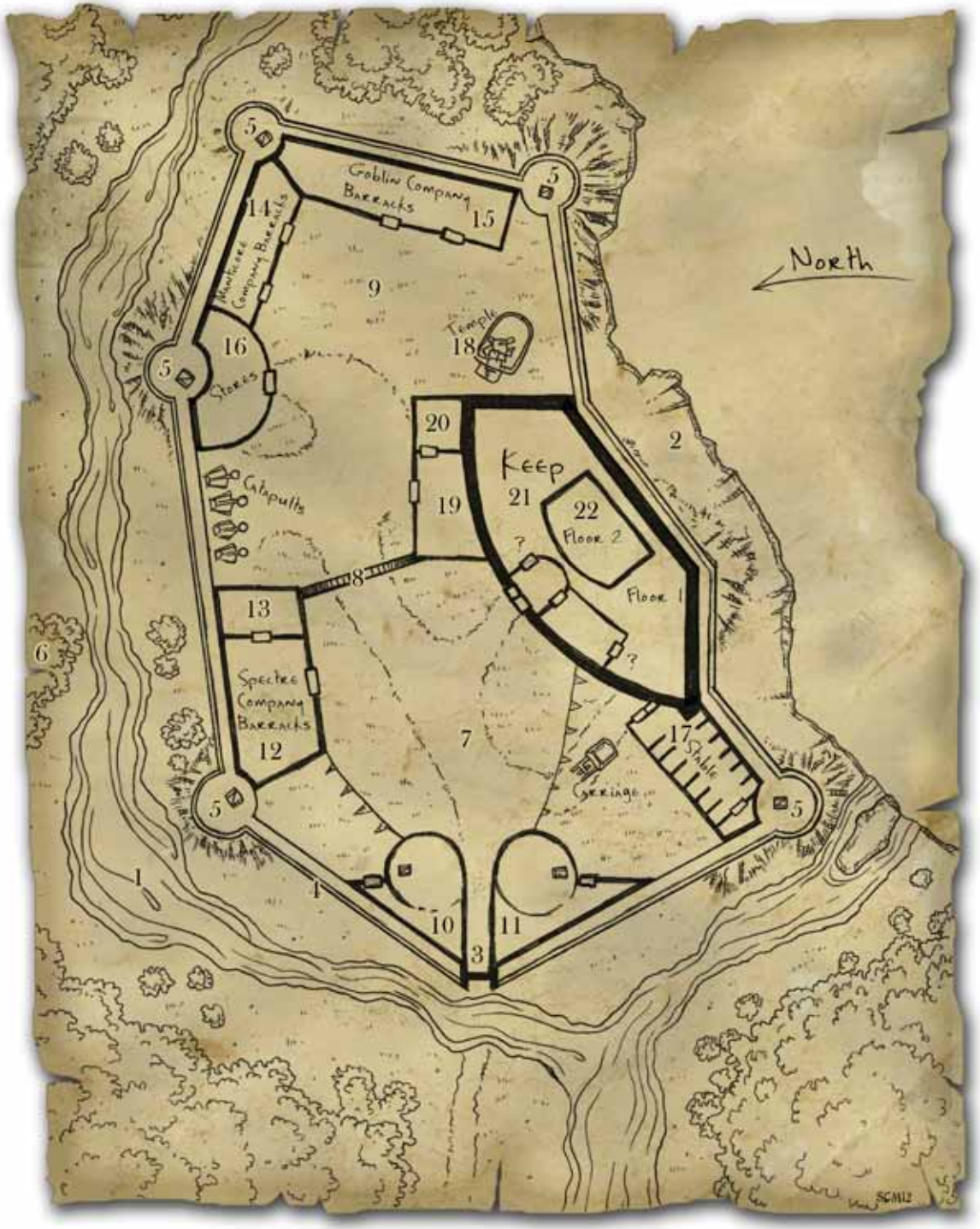
Tanlan's home base is a large castle a short distance south of Elderwood. The castle is hundreds of years old, but Tanlan claimed and renovated it only a decade ago. It stands on a stony cliff above a canyon carved out by the Dryad's Lament, a wide river that flows out from the dense forest. Lumber merchants of Elderwood use this waterway to transport logs eastward to the trading city of Rivergate. At the top of the cliff, a narrower river flows around the castle, splitting into two branches and creating twin waterfalls that flow down into the Dryad's Lament below.

## Castle Locations

The locations inside the castle are roughly divided according to the first three parts of the caper.

### Outside the Wall

**1. Moat.** A river flows around the castle and off the cliff behind it. The smaller south branch was channeled out to create a moat that covers the exposed sides of the castle. Crossing the moat's calm water isn't difficult (Athletics DC 10), but doing so can make a lot of noise. If guards are near the




location where the characters cross the moat, those crossing need to make Stealth checks against the guards.

**2. Cliff.** The top of the rocky cliff stands 40 feet above the Dryad's Lament river below. The craggy surface is constantly wet with the spray from the waterfalls, so that climbing the cliff requires a DC 20 Athletics check. (Call for one check rather than counting out squares or having the characters climb round by round.) A creature that falls or jumps off the cliff lands in water, so use d4s for the falling damage.

*Cavern:* About 20 feet down the cliff, a hidden cavern opens up behind the moat waterfall. A narrow stair (moderate DC Perception check to spot) leads to the cavern. The place shows signs of humanoid use, including bits of rope and old footprints.

A careful search (hard DC Perception) reveals two chutes in the cavern ceiling 15 feet above the floor. The chutes are wide enough for a Tiny creature to squeeze through. Each chute slopes steeply, then twists vertically to block line of sight from one end to the other. At the top, each chute is blocked by a grate covered with a stone tile. These grates open up in the vault (see "Vault Features," page 19).

**3. Gate.** A large drawbridge allows access to the castle through the front gate. Though it has no portcullis, guards keep a close watch on the gate. Anyone trying to sneak through takes a –5 penalty to his or her Stealth check. Characters attempting to trick or negotiate with the guards use the skill check DCs appropriate for the guards' routines. Gaheel and Wolf Company have their living spaces inside the gatehouse.

**4. Outer Walls.** The thick walls of the castle stand 15 feet high, going up to 20 feet along the sides of the keep. Parapets run along the top of each wall, allowing for easy movement between towers. Climbing an outer wall requires a DC 20 Athletics check. Getting over the wall stealthily requires a check against the DC from Manticore Company's routine.

**5. Towers.** The castle's towers stand 25 feet high. Each one has a hatch at the top, a staircase leading down, a door out to each parapet the tower connects to, and a door at the bottom. The doors at the bottom lead into rooms except for the southeast and northwest towers, which exit directly to the courtyard.

**6. Secret Tunnel.** To grant the spies of Specter Company the ability to leave the castle undetected, the mercenaries dug a narrow tunnel under the moat and out to the forest. Adventurers who perform reconnaissance can find the entrance in the woods with a thorough search and a hard DC Perception check. Characters can travel through in single file, ending up in the Specter Company barracks (area 12).

## Inside the Wall

With the exception of the keep, the storehouse, and the gatehouse, buildings inside the walls are 10 feet high.

**7. West Courtyard.** This courtyard features entrances to the gate, Gaheel's quarters, the Wolf Company barracks, the Specter Company barracks, the stable, and the keep. An empty coach sits near the stable entrance. It requires two horses to pull it.

**8. Center Wall.** A wall with a wide archway divides the two halves of the courtyard, connecting the roof of Olos's quarters with the roof of the banquet hall. The wall is narrow, requiring a moderate DC Acrobatics check to balance while crossing. Torchlight doesn't reach the archway well, so a character gains a +2 bonus to any Stealth checks made while crossing it.

**9. East Courtyard.** This courtyard has entrances to the storehouse, the Manticore Company barracks, the Goblin Company barracks, the banquet hall, and the southeast tower. A temple stands within, and four catapults are positioned near the north wall.

*Catapults:* These siege engines haven't been used in a long time, but each is ready to be fired and has a pile of rocks nearby. Each catapult can deliver a payload—whether a rock, a person, or a bag of treasure—over the outer wall. Repositioning the catapults takes time and effort, and makes a great deal of noise.

**10. Gaheel's Quarters.** This two-story dwelling is full of empty bottles and dusty trophies. A staircase connects the two levels, then leads on up to the top of the tower.

**11. Wolf Barracks.** These rooms are similar in structure to Gaheel's quarters, but are packed with five beds on each floor.

**12. Specter Barracks.** The spacious barracks of Specter Company are lined with desks. Each is covered in scrolls and maps containing information regarding Elderwood and the other towns that Tanlan controls. This room contains the only entrance to Olos's quarters.

**13. Olos's Quarters.** The spymaster is well paid, and ornate furniture (sized for a halfling) fills his quarters. His documents are filed away in a large chest with an intricate lock (hard DC Thievery to open). They include a map of the keep's interior, not including the vault. You can also place information here regarding other parts of the adventure the players expressed an interest in but couldn't figure out.

**14. Manticore Barracks.** The archers have tidy living quarters, which feature worktables set up for fletching arrows. A door from here leads up to the northeast tower.

**15. Goblin Barracks.** Next door to the prim archers stands the rowdy clubhouse of Goblin Company. Cots fill this long room, the floor of which is littered with half-eaten meals and empty beer mugs. Thorsk lives here with the troops, who party whenever they're not on duty. The barracks are too small for the ogre mercenary Churg, who sleeps in the small temple (area 18).

**16. Storehouse.** All kinds of supplies are stored here, from armaments to furniture to food. After the food delivery on the morning of day 3, the larder in this building is full.

**17. Stables.** Horses occupy six of the twelve stalls here. The other horses are with Hydra Company, Kamren, and Lord Tanlan at Toad's Hollow.

**18. Temple.** Tanlan has never used this temple as a place of worship. Given the lack of hygiene of its current resident, the ogre known as Churg, it probably won't be used for such a purpose again. The ogre can barely fit through the temple's doors.

**19. Mess Hall.** Two long tables lined with benches provide seating for a feast, but this room is deserted except at mealtimes. It has the only entrance to the kitchen, but offers no access to the keep.

**20. Kitchen.** The cook prepares meals here, using a large cast-iron oven. He's a member of Goblin Company, so he spends most of his free time in the Goblins' barracks.

## Outside the Keep

Tanlan allows few people into his keep, which he keeps highly secured.

**21. Keep (First Level).** The larger lower section of the keep stands 20 feet high. Doors on the north wall are the only entrance.

A character carrying one of Tanlan's amulet keys can place the amulet in a triangular recess in one of the doors, then recite the command phrase "Toad's Hollow" to magically open it. Attempting to open the doors with the amulet and the wrong password, or simply trying to force them open, triggers an alarm that sounds like a braying donkey. The alarm is loud enough to alert guards throughout the castle.

**22. Keep (Second Level).** Tanlan's quarters make up the smaller second floor of the keep, which stands another 10 feet above the first floor. A chimney sticks out from the roof, providing one of the few ways to enter the keep other than the main doors. Details for doing so appear in area 10 of the "Keep Interior" section.

## Keep Interior

Once the adventurers breach the keep, use the keep map for reference. Many of the walls have windows, but these are narrow slits filled with dark-colored stained glass that blocks line of sight. The vault is described in its own section.

**1. Antechamber.** Tanlan meets guests in this small room, but rarely takes them farther within. A map painted across the curved back wall shows the towns Tanlan has brought under his control.

**2. Banquet Hall.** A long table surrounded by ornate chairs gathers dust. Tanlan hasn't put much work into renovating this room, since he prefers to take his meals in his study or his quarters.

**3. Fermina's Quarters.** This former kitchen has been converted into a bedroom for Fermina. She keeps only a few of her arcane supplies here, the rest of which are in the library.

**4. Storage.** This room houses some of Tanlan's possessions, including clothes, keepsakes, and spare furniture. Preserved food and barrels of water are also laid in here, in case Tanlan is ever forced to endure a siege.

**5. Trophy Room.** Trophies, collected in Tanlan's time as a merchant or stolen during his conquests, hang from the walls and rest on display stands in this room. Few of the trophies are valuable, but a few rare stuffed animals and relics from fallen civilizations can be found in the collection. A spiral staircase leads up to Tanlan's personal quarters.

**6. Sitting Room.** In front of the large hearth in this room, Tanlan holds conferences with his mercenary advisors. When Tanlan is at the keep, Olos, Fermina, and Kamren meet with him every day or two. Others, Gaheel in particular, meet with him more rarely. A character who enters the keep through the chimney (see area 10) emerges on the hearth in this room.

**7. Study.** Tanlan's opulent private study contains his desk, maps, contracts, and personal books. The desk is littered with half-finished letters, Tanlan's pentagonal letter seal, and some sealing wax. In the southeast corner stands a large stuffed bear. With a deliberate search or a hard DC passive Perception check, an adventurer notices that the floor in front of the bear is scuffed, as though it has been moved frequently. Sliding the bear reveals a hidden hatch and a staircase down to the vault.

**8. Library.** One quarter of the books here belong to Tanlan. The rest are from Fermina's collection. Fermina spends most of her time in the library, and she has a table full of reagents set up where she can experiment with new rituals and alchemical formulas.

**9. Tanlan's Quarters.** The spiral staircase from the trophy hall leads to Tanlan's private chambers, set at the highest point in the castle. A bed, a wardrobe, a desk, and a small table stand here. The hearth leads to the chimney, but through a narrow vent sized only for Small or smaller creatures.

**10. Chimney.** An adventurer can enter the keep through the chimney. It's a tight fit for Medium characters, requiring a hard DC Acrobatics check to squeeze through. Small or smaller characters can clamber through with a moderate DC Acrobatics check. It's 30 feet from the opening to the hearth below. A character can teleport down, but might need to drop a light source to see the far end. The chimney exits into the sitting room (area 6).

## The Vault

The treasure hoard that funds Tanlan's army sits securely behind multiple defenses in an underground vault.

### Vault Features

The ceiling in this area is 15 feet high, and the walls are mortared stone (Athletics DC 20 to climb). The inner chamber of the vault is where Tanlan's loot is kept. Before the characters get there, they have to contend with or bypass the vault's defenses.

**Illumination:** The vault is in darkness. Characters need to have a light source or be able to see in the dark.

**Alarms:** Several of the defenses, when not breached successfully, trigger a keening wail that can be heard throughout the castle above. When an alarm goes off, the nearest mercenaries arrive in 3 rounds, or sooner if you decide it's appropriate (or if you spend a plot point).

**Hidden Chutes:** Floor tiles in the southwest and southeast corners of the vault's inner chamber cover hidden chutes (hard DC Perception check to find). Each tile can be pried loose (easy DC Thievery or moderate DC Athletics check).

Grates beneath the tiles close off the chutes so that not even a Tiny creature can fit through the bars. However, the vault's silver bars and items of a similar size fit through the holes in the grate easily. Anything that goes through a grate falls down a chute and lands in the waterfall cavern (area 2 on the castle map).

Tanlan sometimes uses these chutes to move valuables to and from the vault in secret without bringing such items through the castle. Their original purpose was to provide a way of clearing the vault after the sleeping gas or water outlets defense has been activated.

## Initiative

The vault functions as a huge trap, so it makes sense to run activity here round by round. Have the characters roll initiative when they reach the double doors at the bottom of the staircase.

If the characters are overcoming the vault's defenses too easily, you can use any plot points you have remaining to slow them down. In general, you're better off spending plot points during the assault on the vault and letting the escape with the treasure go quickly and smoothly.

## Silver Bars

The treasury contains 10,000 gp in the form of forty silver bars. Each bar weighs 50 pounds and is worth 250 gp. The bars weigh a total of 2,000 pounds.

The players might be expecting treasure that's easier to move, such as gold or gems. As such, this final reveal can be treated as one last obstacle to pulling off the caper successfully.

## Defenses

Six possible defenses can be placed on the vault. Choose three of them to begin with, playing to the characters' strengths by using defenses with countermeasures that make use of their best skills. Place the defenses in whatever order you choose, based on how well equipped the adventurers are to take on each defense, and how you think the players will enjoy the challenge. For example, you might use the complex lock if one of the characters is highly skilled in Thievery.

Spending plot points on Fermina can increase the number of defenses (see page 10). Some defenses are straightforward traps that the characters must overcome, while others require creative thinking to pass.

### Complex Lock

This intricate lock is made to keep out even expert thieves. You can place this lock on the double doors, or put a metal box or cage over the silver bars and seal it with the lock.

The only exposed part of the lock is a circular disc with eight square metal nubs on its outside edge. Davek writing on the disc reads:

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A character who reads Dwarven can translate the runes as "3 Paths." Any character can make a moderate DC History check, with a +2 bonus if he or she is a dwarf. Success reveals that this is the name of a famous dwarven poem, an epic that details the three paths to victory followed by the ancient dwarf king Brannorg. The names of the three chapters of the epic are "The Hand of Victory," "The Seal of Power," and "The Sword of Conquest."

This hint corresponds directly to the three stages of the lock. Getting past the first stage requires that the lock be manipulated by hand; the next stage is unlocked with Tanlan's personal letter seal (found in area 7 of the keep); and the third stage can be overcome with the help of a sword. If the players get into the act and experiment with different ways to open the lock based on the clues, give them more hints to bring them close to the right answer. If they figure out the way the lock is supposed to open, decrease all DCs by one category.

**Stage One:** Opening the first stage of the lock requires a character to press the correct five pins (out of eight) at the same time. Doing this requires making a hard DC Thievery check as a standard action. A character who succeeds on a moderate DC Perception check to study the pins gains a +2 bonus to the Thievery check. Only one character can aid this Thievery check. If this stage is completed, the disc pops open on a hinge to reveal a pentagonal hole—the second stage.

**Stage Two:** A few inches inside the hole is a pentagonal array of flat plates that spring back when prodded. These must be simultaneously pressed back, each to a different distance. Doing this requires a hard DC Thievery check as a standard action. One other character can assist with an easy DC Thievery check, holding tools in place to free up the character making the check. Alternatively, the lock opens automatically if Tanlan's letter seal is inserted into it (see area 7 of the keep). If this lock is opened, the cylindrical lock apparatus slowly slides out to reveal the third stage.

### ISN'T THAT A LOT OF MONEY?

Yes. 10,000 gp is approximately how much a 10th-level party would gain over an entire level. If the adventurers escape with Tanlan's wealth and don't give any away, that wealth might attract unwanted attention in later adventures.

**Stage Three:** This part of the lock is a metal cylinder with slots opposite one another on each side. The slots are four inches long and half an inch wide. Looking inside reveals a series of metal rods with a narrow opening in the middle. The rods slide away from the opening if pressure is applied from the middle, but they don't move up or down. This lock can be opened with a hard DC Thievery check as a standard action. One other character can assist with a moderate DC Thievery check to manipulate the rods on the opposite side. The lock can also be opened by sliding a longsword or short sword through the gap.

## Perilous Passage

When the characters get past the double doors, they see an oblong area 10 feet wide with two doors set into the far wall. The doors are closed but not locked.

Beyond these two doorways, one path leads to the inner chamber and is unimpeded, while the other is a corridor that only seems to be safe. If a creature moves north from the middle square of that corridor into the square closer to the inner chamber, a magical sensor is triggered. Stone slabs drop down just inside the corridor on either end, trapping anyone inside the passageway, and an alarm sounds.

**Countermeasures:** A successful moderate DC Dungeoneering check reveals an abnormality in the ceiling ahead, suggesting that part of it is not connected to the stone around it. A character in the middle square of the corridor or the square to the south of it can make a hard DC Arcana check to locate the invisible sensor before triggering it. Lifting one of the stone slabs after they have fallen requires a hard DC Athletics check. Alternatively, a hidden lever (hard DC Perception check to find) on the outside of the corridor adjacent to each slab causes it to rise again. The guards use these releases if they come in response to an alarm.

## Pressure Plates

The floor tiles under and adjacent to the stack of silver bars settle under the treasure's weight. (Treat each square as one tile.) The defense is set to trigger whenever all the bars are removed from one of the plates, or if weight is put on one of the plates that currently has nothing on it. If the plates trigger, an alarm sounds.

The plates are flush with the floor when not activated, and press down half an inch below the floor when activated. Only a narrow seam marks the edge between the plates and the rest of the floor.

**Countermeasures:** An easy DC Perception check spots the plates pressed down beneath the bars. Spotting the plates around the bars requires a moderate DC Perception check. For passive Perception checks, increase each difficulty category by one.

Rigging a plate so it can't move requires a moderate DC Thievery check.

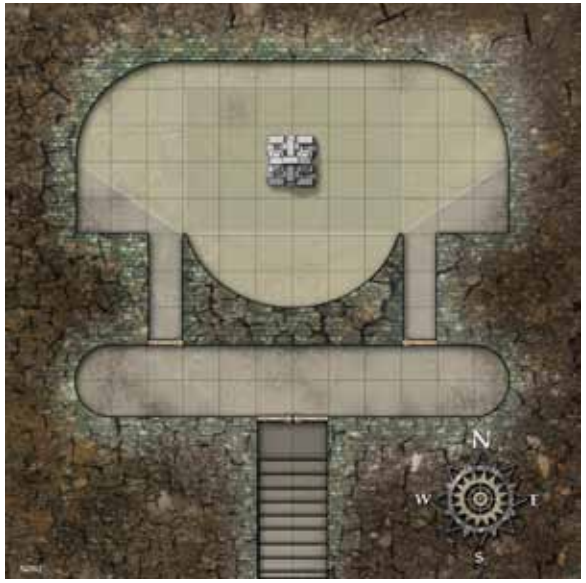
Even one silver bar resting on a plate is enough to keep a plate pressed down. Other items, such as chairs or heavy books, can also do the job. Adding additional weight to the stack of bars (for example, a character climbing on top of the stack) does not further depress the plates beneath it.

## Sleep Gas

A magical sensor triggers the release of sleep gas as soon as anyone moves from one of the narrow corridors into the vault. If Tanlan or Fermina crosses the sensor curtain ahead of anyone else entering the inner chamber, the trap doesn't activate.

The gas begins visibly filling the vault as soon as any character trips the sensor, but it takes a while to build up. It doesn't go up the stairs, so any creature on the steps outside the double doors is unaffected.

Starting in the third round after the gas begins to flow, any creature that ends its turn in the vault must make a moderate DC Endurance check each round. A creature holding its breath must still make this




check. A creature that fails the check is slowed and takes a –2 penalty to d20 rolls. A slowed creature that fails the check is instead dazed and takes a –4 penalty to d20 rolls. A dazed creature that fails the check becomes unconscious. After being subjected to any gas effect, a creature that succeeds on a subsequent Endurance check has that effect reduced to the previous effect.

**Countermeasures:** Detecting magic using Arcana (hard DC) reveals the invisible sensor. The sensor can be disabled with three successful hard DC Arcana checks made by a character who has training in Arcana.

A successful hard DC Perception check reveals that the gas comes out of a dozen narrow vents near the top of the ceiling. A character can climb the wall and use appropriate materials or tools to plug a vent with an easy DC Thievery check. For every two vents plugged, characters gain a +1 bonus to Endurance checks made against the gas.

The hidden chutes (see "Vault Features") can be used to counter the gas. Uncovering one chute causes

the heavy gas to vent out along the floor, granting characters in the vault a +2 bonus to checks made against the gas. Removing both chute covers thins the gas considerably, granting a +5 bonus instead.

The gas persists in this area until one or both of the chutes is opened. If one grate is exposed, the gas dissipates to a harmless concentration in 5 minutes. If both grates are opened, it takes 2 minutes for the gas to flow out.

The players might come up with other ways to defend against the gas, such as breathing through wet cloth. Grant them bonuses to their Endurance checks if they do.

## Watchful Eye

A magic crystal sensor embedded high on the curved wall of the inner chamber between the narrow corridors detects intruders. The eye can do nothing other than see; it doesn't detect sounds or other sensations. The eye can't view the entire chamber at one time (see "Countermeasures"). The area the eye is currently viewing is illuminated by a glow. This illumination is obvious if the chamber is otherwise in darkness. If the chamber is lit, perceiving the glow and noticing the sensor requires a moderate DC Perception check.

From its position, the eye can't see characters who are in the narrow corridors or in the corners where the hidden chutes are located (these areas are shaded on the map). If it sees an unauthorized intruder, its alarm goes off. A character who makes a moderate DC Arcana check realizes where the eye can and can't see.

**Countermeasures:** The sensor is capable of seeing only a one-third segment of the inner chamber at a time as it sweeps back and forth over the area. It changes its viewing angle every round, so that it can observe the entire chamber in 3 rounds. The two squares directly beneath the sensor in the center of the curved wall are a blind spot; any creature in one of those squares can't be detected. Anyone who watches the eye for 1 round can determine this information.

Avoiding the sensor as it makes its sweep requires luck, good timing, and precise movement (moderate DC Acrobatics or the use of an appropriate movement power or teleportation power). A character who reaches the blind spot can pry the crystal loose from the wall (hard DC Thievery) or cover it (easy DC Thievery). Failing this check by 5 or more sets off the eye's alarm.

A character who has training in Arcana can attempt a hard DC check as a standard action to blind the eye, making it possible for anyone to move in the eye's field of vision for 1 round. Failing the check by 5 or more sets off the eye's alarm. You might allow appropriate powers to also blind or hinder the eye.

Any creature that looks like Tanlan, Kamren, Fermina, or Olos won't activate the alarm. A good disguise or illusion can thus trick the eye.

## Water Outlets

This defense does not exist on its own, but needs to be tied to the complex lock, the watchful eye, or the pressure plates. When an alarm is raised by the defense it's associated with, water begins to fill the vault, flowing in through two floor-level pipes from the moat river. As with the sleep gas, the water won't rise above the bottom of the stairs.

Water pours in rapidly over a minute.

*Round 1:* Two feet deep; squares in the vault are difficult terrain.

*Round 3:* Five feet deep; creatures might have to swim (Athletics DC 10) to move in the vault.

*Round 6:* Seven feet deep; most creatures need to swim.

*Round 10:* Water fills the vault; a character must hold his or her breath (*Rules Compendium*, page 180) or drown.

**Countermeasures:** The room stops filling only if both pipes are blocked. Each pipe is the size of a human fist. Since the water is under strong pressure, it takes significant force (hard DC Athletics) and appropriate material to block a pipe.

A panel in the wall near each pipe (hard DC Perception to find) conceals a valve that shuts off the flow of water. It takes a moderate DC Athletics check to turn the valve if the water is flowing. One character can assist in turning the valve.

The hidden chutes (see "Vault Features") can be used to drain water from the room. Uncovering one chute balances the flow of water and keeps it at its current level. Uncovering both chutes causes the water to lower at the same rate it normally rises. Pulling the tile from either chute requires an Athletics check, with a DC that depends on the depth of the water—two feet (easy DC), five feet (moderate DC), or seven feet or more (hard DC). One character can assist in opening a chute.

# The Opposition

This section provides statistics blocks for enemy characters. You can change these characters' levels to meet your needs. If the adventurers wind up in combat, feel free to mix mercenaries from differing units to create battles that have a variety of opponents.

## Mercenary Leaders

Kamren, Olos, and Thorsk appear below. Fermina avoids combat, but use the eladrin twilight incanter if you need statistics for her. Gaheel was once a better fighter, but the half-elf bandit captain statistics now serve for him. Lord Tanlan is unlikely to fight, but you can use the human noble statistics for him.

**Kamren, Human Merc Captain** — **Level 10 Soldier (Leader)**
Medium natural humanoid — XP 500

**HP** 102; **Bloodied** 51 — **Initiative** +12
**AC** 26, **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 21 — **Perception** +12
**Speed** 6

**Traits**

**Natural Leader**
At the start of an encounter, any ally within 5 squares of Kamren gains a +2 power bonus to its initiative check.

**Threatening Reach**
Kamren can make opportunity attacks against enemies within 2 squares of her.

**Standard Actions**

**Glaive** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 2 (one creature); +15 vs. AC
*Hit:* 4d4 + 8 damage.
*Effect:* Kamren can slide the target 1 square to another square within 2 squares of her.

**Glaive Sweep** (weapon) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞
*Attack:* Close blast 2 (creatures in the blast); +13 vs. Reflex
*Hit:* 4d4 + 8 damage, and the target falls prone.

**Triggered Actions**

**Hook In** ✦ **At-Will**
*Trigger:* An enemy adjacent to Kamren shifts 1 square.
*Effect (Immediate Reaction):* Kamren uses *glaive* against the triggering enemy.

**Skills** Acrobatics +15, Bluff +13, Insight +12
**Str** 18 (+9) **Dex** 21 (+10) **Wis** 14 (+7)
**Con** 14 (+7) **Int** 13 (+6) **Cha** 17 (+8)
**Alignment** unaligned **Languages** Common, Giant
**Equipment** leather armor, glaive

**Olos, Halfling Spymaster** — **Level 11 Lurker**
Medium natural humanoid — XP 600

**HP** 87; **Bloodied** 43 — **Initiative** +14
**AC** 25, **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 24, **Will** 23 — **Perception** +13
**Speed** 6 — Darkvision

**Standard Actions**

**Dagger** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 1 (one creature); +16 vs. AC
*Hit:* 4d4 + 9 damage.

**Dagger** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Ranged 5 (one creature); +16 vs. AC
*Hit:* 4d4 + 9 damage.

**Deadly Daggers** (weapon) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞
*Attack:* Close blast 3 (enemies in the blast); +16 vs. AC
*Hit:* 4d4 + 9 damage.
*Effect:* Olos uses *spinning tumbler*.

**Spinning Tumbler** (stance) ✦ **At-Will**
*Effect:* Olos assumes the spinning tumbler stance until the start of his next turn. He can't attack until the stance ends. The first time he hits an enemy before the end of the turn during which the stance ends, he deals that enemy 5d6 extra damage.

**Triggered Actions**

**Tumbling Dodge** ✦ **At-Will**
*Trigger:* An attack hits Olos while he is in spinning tumbler stance.
*Effect (Opportunity Action):* Olos makes an Acrobatics check. If the check result exceeds the triggering attack roll, the attack instead misses Olos, and he can shift up to 2 squares.

**Skills** Athletics +11, Acrobatics +15, Stealth +15, Thievery +15
**Str** 12 (+6) **Dex** 21 (+10) **Wis** 16 (+8)
**Con** 15 (+7) **Int** 12 (+6) **Cha** 14 (+7)
**Alignment** evil **Languages** Common
**Equipment** leather armor, 13 daggers, *goggles of night*

**Thorsk, Half-Orc Enforcer** — **Level 10 Brute (Leader)**
Medium natural humanoid — XP 500

**HP** 128; **Bloodied** 64 — **Initiative** +9
**AC** 22, **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 20 — **Perception** +5
**Speed** 6 (8 when charging) — Low-light vision

**Traits**

**Battle Fury** ✦ **Aura** 3
When any ally in the aura drops to 0 hit points, it can make a basic attack as a free action.

**Standard Actions**

**Scimitar** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 1 (one creature); +15 vs. AC
*Hit:* 2d8 + 10 damage, or 1d8 + 26 damage if Thorsk scores a critical hit.

**Minor Actions**

**Off-Hand Skewer** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will** (1/round)
*Attack:* Melee 1 (one enemy Thorsk is flanking); +15 vs. AC
*Hit:* 1d8 damage.

**Triggered Actions**

**Furious Assault** ✦ **Encounter**
*Trigger:* Thorsk's attack damages an enemy.
*Effect (Free Action):* The triggering attack deals 1d10 extra damage.

**Skills** Intimidate +12
**Str** 21 (+10) **Dex** 18 (+9) **Wis** 10 (+5)
**Con** 18 (+9) **Int** 9 (+4) **Cha** 14 (+7)
**Alignment** evil **Languages** Common, Giant
**Equipment** leather armor, 2 scimitars

**Eladrin Twilight Incanter** **Level 8 Controller**
Medium fey humanoid XP 350

**HP** 82; **Bloodied** 41 **Initiative** +7
**AC** 22, **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 22 **Perception** +5
**Speed** 6 Low-light vision
**Saving Throws** +5 against charm effects

**Standard Actions**

**Spear** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 1 (one creature); +13 vs. AC
*Hit:* 2d8 + 4 damage, and the target is slowed until the end of the eladrin's next turn.

**Binding Bolt** (force) ✦ **Encounter**
*Attack:* Ranged 5 (one creature); +11 vs. Reflex
*Hit:* 2d8 + 7 force damage, and the target is immobilized until the end of the eladrin's next turn.
*Miss:* The target is slowed until the end of the eladrin's next turn.

**Teleporting Bolt** (force, teleportation) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Ranged 5 (one creature); +11 vs. Reflex
*Hit:* 2d10 + 5 force damage, and the eladrin teleports the target up to 3 squares.
*Miss:* The eladrin can teleport the target 1 square.

**Dazzling Blast** (radiant) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⚅
*Attack:* Close blast 3 (enemies in the blast); +11 vs. Will
*Hit:* 4d6 + 2 radiant damage, and the target is blinded until the end of the eladrin's next turn.

**Move Actions**

**Fey Step** (teleportation) ✦ **Encounter**
*Effect:* The eladrin teleports up to 5 squares.

**Str** 12 (+5) **Dex** 16 (+7) **Wis** 12 (+5)
**Con** 10 (+4) **Int** 20 (+9) **Cha** 16 (+7)

**Alignment** unaligned **Languages** Common, Elven
**Equipment** robes, spear

**Half-Elf Bandit Captain** **Level 6 Skirmisher (Leader)**
Medium natural humanoid XP 250

**HP** 69; **Bloodied** 34 **Initiative** +9
**AC** 20, **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 18 **Perception** +8
**Speed** 6 Low-light vision

**Standard Actions**

**Longsword** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. AC
*Hit:* 2d8 + 5 damage, and the captain shifts 1 square.

**Dagger** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Ranged 5/10 (one creature); +11 vs. AC
*Hit:* 2d4 + 7 damage.

**Slash and Dash** (weapon) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⚄ ⚅
*Effect:* The captain makes uses *longsword*, shifts 2 squares, and then makes uses *dagger.*

**Triggering Slash** (weapon) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⚅
*Attack:* Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. AC
*Hit:* 1d8 + 4 damage, and one ally shifts 1 square and makes a melee basic attack as a free action.

**Skills** Athletics +11, Diplomacy +11, Insight +8, Stealth +12
**Str** 16 (+6) **Dex** 19 (+7) **Wis** 11 (+3)
**Con** 13 (+4) **Int** 10 (+3) **Cha** 16 (+6)

**Alignment** unaligned **Languages** Common, Elven
**Equipment** leather armor, longsword, 6 daggers

**Human Noble** **Level 5 Controller (Leader)**
Medium natural humanoid XP 200

**HP** 60; **Bloodied** 30 **Initiative** +3
**AC** 19, **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 18 **Perception** +3
**Speed** 5 Low-light vision

**Traits**

**Protected**
The noble gains a +2 bonus to all defenses while it is adjacent to an ally.

**Standard Actions**

**Longsword** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 1 (one creature); +10 vs. AC
*Hit:* 2d8 + 4 damage.

**Urge Hesitation** (charm) ✦ **Encounter**
*Attack:* Close burst 5 (enemies in the burst); +8 vs. Will
*Hit:* The target cannot use a standard action during its next turn.

**Appoint Champion** ✦ **At-Will**
*Effect:* Close burst 10 (one ally in the burst); the target makes a basic attack as a free action and shifts 1 square before or after the attack.

**Inspirational Authority** ✦ **Encounter**
*Effect:* Close burst 10 (one ally in the burst); the target uses an at-will, encounter, or recharge attack power as a free action.

**Skills** Diplomacy +10, Insight +8, Intimidate +10
**Str** 15 (+4) **Dex** 12 (+3) **Wis** 12 (+3)
**Con** 12 (+3) **Int** 14 (+4) **Cha** 16 (+5)

**Alignment** unaligned **Languages** Common
**Equipment** chainmail, light shield, longsword

## Goblin Company

Most members of Goblin Company are minion thugs. Churg, the ogre, is a tougher foe.

**Human Thug** **Level 7 Minion Skirmisher**
Medium natural humanoid XP 75

**HP** 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. **Initiative** +5
**AC** 21, **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 18 **Perception** +4
**Speed** 6

**Traits**

**Rush into Battle**
Whenever the thug hits a creature with a charge attack, the target grants combat advantage until the end of the thug's next turn.

**Standard Actions**

**Club** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC
*Hit:* 7 damage.

**Str** 14 (+5) **Dex** 11 (+3) **Wis** 12 (+4)
**Con** 13 (+4) **Int** 10 (+3) **Cha** 13 (+4)

**Alignment** unaligned **Languages** Common
**Equipment** club

**Ogre Mercenary** **Level 8 Soldier**
Large natural humanoid (giant) XP 350

**HP** 93; **Bloodied** 46 **Initiative** +8
**AC** 24, **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 19 **Perception** +6
**Speed** 8

**Standard Actions**

**Morningstar** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 2 (one creature); +13 vs. AC
*Hit:* 2d8 + 7 damage.
*Effect:* The ogre marks the target until the end of the ogre's next turn.

**Handaxe** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Ranged 10 (one creature); +13 vs. AC
*Hit:* 1d8 + 7 damage.

**Brutal Sweep** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Close blast 2 (creatures in the blast); +13 vs. AC
*Hit:* 1d8 + 7 damage, and the target falls prone.

**Str** 22 (+10) **Dex** 15 (+6) **Wis** 15 (+6)
**Con** 21 (+9) **Int** 7 (+2) **Cha** 8 (+3)

**Alignment** chaotic evil **Languages** Giant
**Equipment** 2 handaxes, morningstar

**Human Duelist** **Level 8 Soldier**
Medium natural humanoid XP 350

**HP** 85; **Bloodied** 42 **Initiative** +11
**AC** 24, **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 20 **Perception** +7
**Speed** 6

**Traits**

**Duelist's Poise**
Whenever the duelist hits an enemy granting combat advantage to it, the enemy is immobilized until the end of the enemy's next turn.

**Standard Actions**

**Longsword** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 1 (one creature); +13 vs. AC
*Hit:* 2d8 + 7 damage.
*Effect:* The duelist marks the target until the end of the duelist's next turn.

**Triggered Actions**

**Advantageous Jab** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Trigger:* An enemy marked by the duelist makes an attack that doesn't include it as a target.
*Attack (Immediate Interrupt):* Melee 1 (the triggering enemy); +13 vs. AC
*Hit:* 1d8 + 8 damage.
*Effect:* The target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls until the end of this turn.

**Skills** Athletics +12
**Str** 16 (+7) **Dex** 20 (+9) **Wis** 17 (+7)
**Con** 13 (+5) **Int** 10 (+4) **Cha** 9 (+3)

**Alignment** unaligned **Languages** Common
**Equipment** leather armor, longsword

## Wolf Company

The wily mercenaries in Wolf Company are experienced soldiers.

**Raven Roost Highwayman** **Level 7 Soldier**
Medium natural humanoid, human XP 300

**HP** 77; **Bloodied** 38 **Initiative** +9
**AC** 23, **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 18 **Perception** +10
**Speed** 6

**Standard Actions**

**Rapier** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC
*Hit:* 2d8 + 6 damage.
*Effect:* The target is marked until the end of the highwayman's next turn.

**Bolt to the Gut** (weapon) ✦ **Encounter**
*Attack:* Ranged 5 (one creature); +12 vs. AC. This attack doesn't provoke opportunity attacks.
*Hit:* 3d6 + 5 damage, and the target is immobilized and takes ongoing 5 damage (save ends both).
*Miss:* The target is immobilized until the end of its next turn.

**Triggered Actions**

**Stand, You Coward** ✦ **At-Will**
*Trigger:* An enemy within 5 squares of the highwayman and marked by it uses an attack power that doesn't include it as a target.
*Effect (Immediate Reaction): Bolt to the gut* recharges, and the highwayman uses it against the triggering enemy.

**Skills** Bluff +11, Intimidate +11, Stealth +12
**Str** 16 (+6) **Dex** 18 (+7) **Wis** 15 (+5)
**Con** 13 (+4) **Int** 12 (+4) **Cha** 16 (+6)

**Alignment** evil **Languages** Common
**Equipment** studded leather, hand crossbow, rapier, 10 bolts

## Manticore Company

All members of Manticore Company are veteran elf archers.

**Elf Bow Master** **Level 9 Artillery**
Medium natural humanoid XP 400

**HP** 70; **Bloodied** 35 **Initiative** +9
**AC** 23, **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 21 **Perception** +12
**Speed** 7 Low-light vision

**Traits**

**Wild Step**
The elf ignores difficult terrain whenever it shifts.

**Standard Actions**

⊕ **Short Sword** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 1 (one creature); +14 vs. AC
*Hit:* 2d6 + 9 damage.

⊕ **Longbow** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Ranged 20 (one or two creatures); +16 vs. AC
*Hit:* 1d10 + 7 damage.

**Move Actions**

**Archer's Escape** ✦ **Encounter**
*Requirement:* The elf must be adjacent to an enemy.
*Effect:* The elf shifts up to its speed and then uses *longbow*.

**Triggered Actions**

**Elven Accuracy** ✦ **Encounter**
*Trigger:* The elf makes an attack roll.
*Effect (Free Action):* The elf rerolls the triggering attack roll and uses the second result.

**Str** 14 (+6) **Dex** 20 (+9) **Wis** 17 (+7)
**Con** 10 (+4) **Int** 11 (+4) **Cha** 11 (+4)

**Alignment** unaligned **Languages** Common, Elven
**Equipment** leather armor, short sword, longbow, 30 arrows

## Specter Company

The tricky spies of Specter Company excel at infiltration and information gathering, and include at least two doppelgangers.

**Gnome Assassin** **Level 7 Skirmisher**
Small fey humanoid XP 300

**HP** 78; **Bloodied** 39 **Initiative** +9
**AC** 21, **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 19 **Perception** +9
**Speed** 5 Low-light vision

**Standard Actions**

⊕ **Katar** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC
*Hit:* 2d6 + 8 damage, or 4d6 + 8 if the attack ended the gnome's *shade form*.

**Move Actions**

**Shadow Step** (teleportation) ✦ **At-Will**
*Requirement:* The gnome must be adjacent to a creature.
*Effect:* The gnome teleports up to 3 squares to a square adjacent to a different creature, and any mark on the gnome ends.

**Minor Actions**

**Shade Form** ✦ **Recharge** when first bloodied
*Effect:* The gnome assumes a shadowy form that lasts until it makes an attack roll or until the end of its next turn. While in this form, it is insubstantial and has vulnerable 5 radiant. In addition, it can make a Stealth check to become hidden if it has any cover or concealment.
*Sustain Minor:* The shadowy form persists until the end of the gnome's next turn.

**Skills** Stealth +12
**Str** 10 (+3) **Dex** 19 (+7) **Wis** 13 (+4)
**Con** 14 (+5) **Int** 14 (+5) **Cha** 16 (+6)

**Alignment** unaligned **Languages** Common, Elven
**Equipment** leather armor, 2 katars

**Doppelganger Infiltrator** **Level 11 Lurker**
Medium natural humanoid (shapechanger) XP 600

**HP** 90; **Bloodied** 45 **Initiative** +15
**AC** 25, **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 23 **Perception** +6
**Speed** 6

**Standard Actions**

⊕ **Dagger** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 1 (one creature); +16 vs. AC
*Hit:* 2d4 + 6 damage.

**Perfect Replica** (illusion, polymorph) ✦ **At-Will**
*Effect:* Melee 1 (one Medium creature). The doppelganger takes on the form of the target and alters its clothing and gear to match those of the target. Until the end of the doppelganger's next turn, the target is immobilized and takes 6d8 extra damage from the doppelganger's *dagger* power. See also *replica switch*.

**Minor Actions**

**Change Shape** (polymorph) ✦ **At-Will**
*Effect:* The doppelganger alters its physical form to appear as a Medium humanoid until it uses change shape again or until it drops to 0 hit points. To assume a specific individual's form, the doppelganger must have seen that individual. Other creatures can make a DC 32 Insight check to discern that the form is a disguise.

**Triggered Actions**

**Replica Switch** ✦ **At-Will**
*Requirement:* The doppelganger must be adjacent to an enemy affected by its *perfect replica*.
*Trigger:* A melee or ranged attack from an enemy unaffected by the doppelganger's *perfect replica* targets the doppelganger.
*Effect (Opportunity Action):* The doppelganger and the enemy affected by its perfect replica swap places, and the triggering attack instead targets the enemy affected by the doppelganger's *perfect replica*.

**Skills** Bluff +14, Insight +11, Stealth +16
**Str** 12 (+6) **Dex** 22 (+11) **Wis** 13 (+6)
**Con** 18 (+9) **Int** 10 (+5) **Cha** 19 (+9)

**Alignment** unaligned **Languages** Common
**Equipment** dagger

### *About the Author*

**Logan Bonner**'s 4th Edition credits include *The Slaying Stone*™ and *Monster Vault*™. He lives in the Seattle area and works as a freelance game designer, writer, and editor. You can follow him on Twitter, where he's @loganbonner.

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# Hall of the Fire Giant King

**A D&D® adventure for characters of levels 18–20**

*By Christopher Perkins*

*Based on the original by Gary Gygax*

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## Introduction

The original *Hall of the Fire Giant King* adventure was written by Gary Gygax and published in 1978 by TSR, Inc. The conclusion of a three-part series, it packed a lot of punch into sixteen pages and presented fire giants as iconic D&D monsters. The tripartite "Giants" series was later collected into a single adventure module titled *Against the Giants* and published by TSR in 1981.

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This adventure is inspired by Gary Gygax's classic module but takes advantage of the latest Dungeons & Dragons® rules. "Hall of the Fire Giant King" can be run as a stand-alone adventure, or you can play it as the conclusion of a four-part series that includes "Steading of the Hill Giant Chief" (*Dungeon* 197), "Warrens of the Stone Giant Thane" (*Dungeon* 198), and "Glacial Rift of the Frost Giant Jarl" (*Dungeon* 199).

## Background

Giants have been raiding the civilized lands in large bands, visiting death and destruction upon villages, towns, and farmlands. Entire militias have been conquered, entire crops wiped out. These marauding bands consist of mixed groups of hill giants, stone giants, frost giants, and fire giants, as well as ogres and other monsters allied with the giants.

Determined to repel the invaders, local lords have begun hiring brave adventurers. The first few groups didn't fare well. Some were crushed beneath the boulders and jackboots of rampaging giants, and others simply never returned from the wilderness. Now, a new band of adventurers has assembled to punish the destructive giants and banish them from the civilized lands.

King Snurre (pronounced *Snur*-ee) Iron-Belly, lord of the fire giants, has done the impossible. He has united the feuding tribes of hill giants, stone giants, frost giants, and fire giants under his blazing banner and focused their wrath on the civilized lands of humans, dwarves, elves, and their ilk. Snurre rules from a mighty hall in the volcanic mountains, beyond the reach of most mortal enemies. The heroes sent to dispatch him, however, are no mere mortals.

Despite the loss of some key allies, Snurre manages to hold the giants together. Far from a brilliant tactician, he relies extensively on the counsel of his advisors, some of whom are drow. The drow have approached the king and shared powerful secrets with him—secrets gleaned from an evil temple nestled deep within his own hall. Only by revealing the drow presence and defeating it can the heroes hope to break the giant alliance.

## Beginning the Adventure

King Snurre's Hall is buried deep beneath a great basalt mound in the Hellfurnaces, a chain of volcanoes in the heart of the Crystalmist Mountains. You can change the location of the fire giants' stronghold and the names of geographical locations to better serve the needs of your home campaign.

It is assumed that the characters have safely arrived at a spot near the hall of the fire giant king—a small cave, hidden by clouds of blowing ash, where they can remain undetected while they plan their offensive. If they decide to take an extended rest between forays against the fire giant stronghold, they can do it safely at the hidden cave as long as they take moderate precautions not to leave a plain trail.

## Quests

In addition to killing foes they encounter in the fire giants' stronghold, the characters can pick up several quests:

### Major Quest: Deliver King Snurre's Head

**18th-level Major Quest (2,000 XP/character)**

*A mighty storm giant lord named Krombaalt descends from the mountains on the back of an enormous thunderhawk and says, "If you bring me the head of that cur, King Snurre Iron-Belly, I will give you a thundercloud tower to call your own."*

This quest comes on the heels of the characters freeing Krombaalt's daughter Elektra from the prison of the frost giant jarl (see "Glacial Rift of the Frost Giant Jarl" in *Dungeon* 199). Whether or not the characters played a role in freeing Elektra, Krombaalt harbors tremendous ill will toward Snurre and his allies.

If the characters bring the head of King Snurre to Krombaalt's castle in the Crystalmist Mountains, they not only gain XP but also receive a *thundercloud tower*, which the characters can use as their personal stronghold and base of operations (see the end of the adventure for more information on this special reward).

### Major Quest: Capture the Traitor

**18th-level Major Quest (2,000 XP/character)**

*Obmi Ironwhisper, an exiled dwarf noble, serves King Snurre as an advisor. The dwarf lords want this traitor to stand trial for treason and are willing to pay 250 platinum pieces for his capture.*

If the characters capture Obmi Ironwhisper (area 7) and return him to civilization alive, they complete this quest and also receive a monetary reward of 250 pp. If they bring back his corpse, the characters still gain the XP award and receive 200 pp. The other 50 pp goes toward raising Obmi from the dead so he can stand trial for his crimes.

### Minor Quest: Confront Eclavdra

**19th-level Minor Quest (500 XP/character)**

*A dark power is uniting the many tribes of giants. Find out who or what is responsible, and destroy them.*

Drow masterminds are the true power behind the alliance of giants, using King Snurre as their figurehead. The characters must learn about the drow and confront Eclavdra to complete this quest. They don't have to defeat the drow priestess.

## Minor Quest: Rescue Moonshadow

**19th-level Minor Quest (500 XP/character)**

*Fire giants have captured an elf princess named Moonshadow, and King Snurre has made exorbitant ransom demands for her safe return. Rescue the princess from his evil clutches!*

If the heroes safely escort Princess Moonshadow (area 13) from the fire giants' stronghold, she and any surviving members of her retinue make their way back to civilization. If the heroes complete this quest, they also receive a monetary reward of 250 pp.

# Running the Adventure

This adventure is location-based. All encounters are keyed to the maps of the fire giant hall and the dungeon below it. As the characters explore these locations, refer to the area descriptions for details on their contents.

## Rests

The adventure is designed to allow characters to take short rests between encounters. Characters who need an extended rest might have to withdraw from the dungeon to avoid incessant attacks.

Players might be reluctant to yield ground and allow the giants to fortify their defenses while they take an extended rest, but that's a choice they must make. As the Dungeon Master, you need to decide what happens while the characters take an extended rest and the extent to which the giants recover from the party's most recent assault. You are strongly advised not to punish the characters for taking an extended rest by "reloading" every encounter in the dungeon. Instead, consider adding one group of reinforcements (see "Giant Reinforcements" below), and have the giants take a few sensible precautions to prepare for the party's return.

## Treasure

The treasure found in this adventure was assigned using the parcel technique of treasure distribution (*Rules Compendium*™, page 298) to ensure that the characters get the appropriate amount of treasure for their level. You can replace listed items with other items of a similar level.

In addition to treasure, giants often possess mundane items of little worth. These items add color and realism to the adventure. As the characters loot corpses and plunder treasure chests, you can throw in a few items chosen or rolled randomly from the following table.

**MUNDANE TREASURES**

| d20 | Mundane Item |
|---|---|
| 1 | Handaxe blade (used as a hand chopper) |
| 2 | Metal helm (used as a bowl) and wooden spoon |
| 3 | Moldy and stinky wheel of cheese |
| 4 | Shabby cloak (wool or hide) |
| 5 | Bone comb |
| 6 | Iron cooking pot |
| 7 | Drinking horn |
| 8 | Skinning knife |
| 9 | Haunch of meat |
| 10 | Mangy fur pelt |
| 11 | Small bag of salt |
| 12 | Old sandals |
| 13 | Waterskin (full) |
| 14 | Cask of ale (half empty) |
| 15 | Necklace of animal fangs or finger bones |
| 16 | 5-foot length of chain |
| 17 | Bag of skulls |
| 18 | Bag of dried mushrooms |
| 19 | 50-foot coil of hemp rope |
| 20 | Carved wooden idol |

## Giant Reinforcements

Not all the fire giants that live in Snurre's Hall are present when the characters attack. A number of them are out on raids and hunting expeditions. Each time the characters take an extended rest during their conquest of the hall, they run the risk of encountering reinforcements.

A typical gang of reinforcements includes two fire giant marauders and four hunting hell hounds. Encounters can be staged with these forces anywhere in and around Snurre's Hall.

Use these encounters sparingly. Too many encounters with reinforcements will result in the characters amassing more XP and gaining levels faster than anticipated.

| **2 Fire Giants** | **Level 18 Soldier** |
|---|---|
| Large elemental humanoid (fire, giant) | XP 2,000 each |
| **HP** 174; **Bloodied** 87 | **Initiative** +11 |
| **AC** 34, **Fortitude** 34, **Reflex** 28, **Will** 28 | **Perception** +14 |
| **Speed** 8 | |
| **Resist** 15 fire | |
| STANDARD ACTIONS | |
| ⊕ **Searing Greatsword** (fire, weapon) ✦ **At-Will** | |
| *Attack:* Melee 2 (one creature); +23 vs. AC | |
| *Hit:* 2d12 + 13 fire damage. | |
| *Effect:* The giant marks the target until the end of the giant's next turn. | |
| ⊹ **Sweeping Sword** (fire, weapon) ✦ **At-Will** | |
| *Attack:* Close blast 2 (enemies in the blast); +23 vs. AC | |
| *Hit:* 2d12 + 13 fire damage. | |
| *Effect:* The giant marks the target until the end of the giant's next turn. | |
| **Str** 23 (+15) **Dex** 11 (+9) **Wis** 10 (+9) | |
| **Con** 22 (+15) **Int** 10 (+9) **Cha** 11 (+9) | |
| **Alignment** evil **Languages** Giant | |
| **Equipment** chainmail, greatsword | |

| 4 Hunting Hell Hounds | Level 18 Minion Brute |
|---|---|
| Medium elemental beast (fire) | XP 500 each |
| **HP** 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. | **Initiative** +13 |
| **AC** 30, **Fortitude** 30, **Reflex** 28, **Will** 27 | **Perception** +17 |
| **Speed** 8 | |
| **Resist** 15 fire | |
| Standard Actions | |
| ⊕ **Bite** (fire) ✦ **At-Will** | |
| *Attack:* Melee 1 (one creature); +23 vs. AC | |
| *Hit:* 11 damage plus 5 fire damage. | |
| ⊹ **Fiery Breath** (fire) ✦ **Encounter** | |
| *Attack:* Close blast 3 (creatures in the blast); +21 vs. Reflex | |
| *Hit:* 18 fire damage. | |
| *Miss:* 9 fire damage. | |
| **Str** 20 (+14) **Dex** 18 (+13) | **Wis** 16 (+12) |
| **Con** 23 (+15) **Int** 2 (+5) | **Cha** 12 (+10) |
| **Alignment** evil **Languages** – | |

## Captured!

If the party is defeated by fire giants or their allies, the adventure isn't necessarily over. At your discretion, the characters can be stripped of their gear and hauled off to the prison (area 13) until King Snurre or his advisor, Obmi, figures out what to do with them.

If the characters convince their captors that they are worth something, Snurre or Obmi is sorely tempted to ransom them, thus giving the heroes more time to plan their escape. Once they escape, they can try to recover their stolen gear, which is kept in area 13E.

Players whose characters were killed can create new characters, if they wish—perhaps survivors of another party captured by the giants.

Escaping captivity can be handled as a skill challenge that uses the Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate, Perception, and Thievery skills (moderate DCs). No one skill can be used more than three times (successfully or not), and to escape, the party must achieve 6 successes before 3 failures. If the characters fail the skill challenge, they can try again after an extended rest.

# King Snurre's Hall

**When the characters arrive, read:**

*Nestled deep within the icy peaks of the Crystalmist Mountains is a chain of volcanoes surrounded by an ashen plain of basalt crisscrossed with rivers of magma. Dubbed the Hellfurnaces, these angry volcanoes send plumes of smoke into the darkened sky, and embers fall like hot rain upon the land. You travel across this hellish expanse to the foot of a steeply rising hill about three hundred feet high.*

*Smoke pours from numerous vents atop the hill, and occasionally some of these holes spurt jets of flame as well. Beneath this mound of slag and black rock lies the Hall of King Snurre. Obsidian doors set into the base of the hill are the only visible entrance. They appear unguarded.*

The obsidian doors that seal the entrance to Snurre's Hall are described in area 1.

Characters can climb the volcanic hill by making DC 15 Athletics checks and then search for another entrance. The only other entrance is a 20-foot-diameter chimney that disgorges neither fire nor smoke. The chimney is on the far side of the hill, near the top. Locating it requires making a DC 25 Perception check while at the hill's peak. The red dragon Brazzemal (area 17) uses the chimney to reach its lair deep beneath Snurre's Hall. The chimney curls and jags as it descends a total of 400 feet before opening into area 17B, and climbing its walls requires DC 20 Athletics checks.

The fire giant stronghold has three levels: the first level (areas 1–8), the second level (areas 9–16), and the third level (areas 17–24).

## First Level (Areas 1–8)

The rooms and passages that form this level are carved from polished reddish-black basalt. The walls are smooth and require a DC 25 Athletics check to climb. The dominant feature of the first level is the throne hall of the king (area 2).

**Ceilings:** Passageways and chambers have vaulted ceilings 30 to 50 feet high.

**Doors:** All doors on this level are made of welded iron plates. Normal-sized double doors are 15 feet tall and half a foot thick; giant-sized double doors are 25 feet tall and 1 foot thick. A Medium or Small character can open a normal door as a standard action, or a minor action with a DC 24 Athletics check. A Medium or Small character can open a giant-sized door as a standard action with a DC 33 Athletics check.

**Illumination:** All areas are brightly lit unless otherwise noted. In some locations, basalt braziers are built into the walls about 1 foot off the floor. These 5-foot-wide, 3-foot-deep stone basins contain burning oil and shed bright light out to 10 squares. In other locations, torches are mounted in iron brackets 10 feet above the floor.

**Oversized Furnishings:** Many furnishings are sized for 12-foot-tall fire giants. They measure slightly more than twice the dimensions of their human-sized counterparts and are eight times the weight.

King Snurre's Hall
First Level
N
W
E
S
6C
6D
6B
6A
5D
5B
5C
5A
Down to 9
7C
7D
7B
7A
2D
8
1
2
3
4C
4D
Down to 11
5
4
2C
S
4B
4A
2A
2B
3C
3B
3A
3D
1
One square = 5 feet

# 1. Obsidian Doors

**Skill Challenge Level 18 (4,000 XP)**

King Snurre does not station guards outside the hall because he trusts that the obsidian portals are impregnable, and he is arrogant enough to believe that no enemy would dare challenge him here.

**Trap:** Obsidian doors.

**When the characters approach the doors, read:**
*A wide, well-trod path leads up to two great slabs of black obsidian set into the base of the hillside. Each portal is thirty feet tall, nine feet wide, and smooth as glass.*

These black stone doors bar entrance into Snurre's Hall. The obsidian doors are 5 feet thick and bereft of handles; iron hinges mounted to the inside walls hold them in place. If a fire giant touches either portal, both doors swing inward quietly and remain open for 1 minute before closing on their own. The doors are magically locked to all others and impervious to physical harm, although they can be opened with a successful skill challenge (see below). A Knock ritual opens the doors but also activates a trap. A Passwall ritual allows the characters to create a temporary passage through the stone doors without triggering the trap.

While the doors are opened, characters can try to wedge or brace them, but the doors weigh several tons, and no amount of force prevents them from closing and sealing again.

## Skill Challenge: Opening the Doors

Unless the characters wait for a fire giant patrol to happen by (see "Development" below), they must figure out a way to open the obsidian doors on their own.

**Level:** 18 (4,000 XP).

**Complexity:** 2 (requires 6 successes 3 three failures).

**Primary Skills:** Arcana, Nature, Religion, Thievery.

*Arcana (DC 32, standard action):* The character utters words of power that weaken the magic of the doors. If the character speaks these words in Giant, he or she gains a +2 bonus to the check. If he or she speaks the words in Primordial, the bonus increases to +4.

*Nature (trained only; primal power source; DC 32, standard action):* The character evokes primal spirits to weaken the magic of the doors.

*Religion (trained only; divine power source; DC 32, standard action):* The character directs astral energy to weaken the magic of the doors.

*Thievery (DC 32, standard action):* The character defaces symbols on the doors, weakening their magic.

**Secondary Skill:** Dungeoneering, History.

*Dungeoneering (DC 32, standard action):* The character notices a defect in the doors that might be exploited. This check doesn't count as a success or failure in the challenge, but a successful check provides a +2 bonus to the party's next Thievery check made as part of this challenge.

*History (DC 32, standard action):* The character gleans some useful information from the pattern of symbols on the door. This check doesn't count as a success or failure in the challenge, but a successful check provides a +2 bonus to the party's next Arcana check made as part of this challenge.

**Success:** The obsidian doors open and remain open for 1 minute.

**Failure:** The doors do not open, and the characters cannot make another attempt until 24 hours have elapsed.

| **Obsidian Doors** Object | **Level 18 Trap** XP 2,000 |
|---|---|
| **Detect** automatic | **Initiative** – |
| **Immune** attacks | |
| **Identify** (Arcana; trained only) | |
| ✦ **DC 17:** The character believes that the doors are magically attuned to fire giants and can be opened only by fire giants—but even so, a Knock ritual should circumvent the magic seal, and a Passwall ritual should allow passage through the doors. | |
| ✦ **DC 23:** The character confirms that powerful magic cast upon the doors renders them impervious to harm, and realizes that using a Knock ritual on the doors might trigger a magical trap. | |
| ✦ **DC 32:** The character discerns that opening the doors improperly triggers a trap that renders anyone who passes through the doors vulnerable to fire. Passwall should bypass this effect (see "Countermeasures" below). | |
| **Identify** (Dungeoneering) | |
| ✦ **DC 17:** The character realizes that the doors are of dwarven craftsmanship. | |
| ✦ **DC 23:** The character notices that the doors fit together almost seamlessly and are airtight. | |
| **Triggered Actions** | |
| **Flame's Curse ✦ At-Will** | |
| *Trigger:* The doors are forced open using a Knock ritual or other means. | |
| *Effect:* Until the doors close again after 1 minute, any creature that walks through the doorway gains vulnerable 10 fire for 24 hours. | |
| **Countermeasures** | |
| ✦ A Passwall ritual can create a temporary passage through the doors without triggering the trap. | |
| ✦ A Remove Affliction ritual can end the trap's effect on one creature. | |

## Development

If the characters cannot breach the obsidian doors, they can wait 1d6 hours for a fire giant patrol to approach or depart the hall and then fight or sneak their way inside. See "Giant Reinforcements" (page 3) for a typical fire giant patrol.

## 2. Throne Hall

**Combat Encounter Level 22 (22,400 XP)**

Beyond the obsidian doors lies a great hall that heads north into the hill and then bends to the east. The characters don't need to travel far to find their nemesis, King Snurre Iron-Belly. The king sits upon his throne, mulling over the next move in his bold campaign and accepting counsel from a drow spy named Taz'zt. Hell hounds and fire giant knights also attend Snurre.

**Light:** Bright (various fires and lava).

**Monsters:** King Snurre, 2 firebred hell hounds, 3 fire giant knights, 8 azer hallwardens, Taz'zt (drow infiltrator).

**Trap:** Inferno pillars.

**When the characters enter through the obsidian doors, read:**

*The floor of this hall is covered with five-foot-wide tiles of polished black obsidian. The vaulted ceiling is fifty feet high and supported by a row of obsidian pillars that runs along the middle of the hall. The pillars are carved with the faces of angry giants, their mouths agape. Curtains of thin iron plates hang at regular intervals along the red and black basalt walls, and scenes of victorious fire giants in battle are etched on these iron tapestries. Between the tapestries, torches in iron brackets set the hall ablaze in a hellish light. Two stone braziers set in the corners near the entrance provide additional illumination.*

*Up ahead, the hall bends toward the east. Rising up from the floor of this elbow is an enormous, crackling fire surrounded by a ten-foot-diameter ring of raised obsidian.*

Hidden behind one of the tapestries near the entrance is a 10-foot-deep, 20-foot-tall alcove (area 2B) containing an azer hallwarden and a large bronze gong. Characters who succeed on a DC 23 Perception check can see the fire-haired azer through the gaps in the curtain's iron plates.

As soon as the azer spots intruders, it strikes the bronze gong with a mallet, alerting those in the throne hall.

**When the characters see area 2C, read:**

*The sheer immensity of the hall is almost overwhelming, but it finally reaches its end at a flight of basalt steps that climbs ten feet to a massive throne hewn from black marble and set with gems. A large stone skull is carved into the wall behind the throne, and lava pours from its jaws into an enormous basin that illuminates the back of the hall.*

*Slouched in the throne is an ugly, powerfully muscled fire giant clad in iron plate armor and wearing an iron helm ringed with spikes. Cast upon his broad shoulders is a cloak made from the scaly hide of a white dragon, and across his lap rests an enormous greatsword. Two hell hounds crouch at the feet of the giant, and between you and them stand three more armored fire giants with smoldering shields and swords.*

Attending Snurre are three fire giant knights (old comrades-in-arms), a band of azer footsoldiers, the drow infiltrator Taz'zt, and the king's royal hell hounds, Scorch and Smoke. Taz'zt lurks behind Snurre's throne and isn't immediately visible. Place the knights and azers throughout the hall as you see fit.

**If Snurre sees the characters, read:**

*The giant on the throne rises to his feet and levels his sword at you. "Ah! You are the maggots who feed on my allies and attack me at every turn . . . the slag on my boots that won't shake off! Now you die!"*

**When the characters see area 2D, read:**

*This hall is slightly narrower than the throne hall, and no iron tapestries hang on the walls. Instead, the walls are carved with bas-reliefs of fire giant warriors riding red dragons. At the north end of the hall is an alcove containing a thirteen-foot-tall statue of a fire giant. The statue is made of black marble and flanked by two flaming basalt braziers set into the walls.*

**2A. The Main Hall:** Various light sources illuminate this L-shaped hall. Flanking the entrance are two basalt braziers containing flaming oil, and a pool of lava lights the raised area where King Snurre's throne rests. In addition, torches are mounted in iron brackets along the walls.

*Fire Pit:* This 10-foot-diameter, 5-foot-deep fire pit is located at the elbow of the hall, directly in front of the iron doors leading to area 5A. The fire is fed by a natural gas spring deep below the hall and comes up through holes in the floor. The obsidian ring that encloses the fire pit is 2 feet high and 2 feet thick. Any creature that enters the fire or starts its turn there takes 10 fire damage and ongoing 10 fire damage (save ends). A creature can take this damage only once per turn.

*Tapestries:* Hanging on the walls are massive tapestries made of interlocking iron plates that are painted to depict scenes of triumphant fire giants. These iron curtains hang from large iron rods bolted to the walls near the ceiling and fall to within an inch of the floor. Each tapestry weighs hundreds of pounds. Moving past a tapestry requires a minor action, and creatures standing behind a tapestry gain superior cover.

**2B. Secret Alcove:** Hidden behind an iron curtain is a 20-foot-high alcove containing an azer hallwarden standing guard. A bronze gong and mallet hang from a freestanding iron frame bolted to the floor. When the azer sees intruders, it strikes the gong to alert the other creatures in the hall.

**2C. Snurre's Throne:** The king's black marble throne rests atop a raised platform that is 10 feet higher than the rest of the hall. Thirteen gems, each worth 1,000 gp, are set into it.

*Keys:* Snurre has a ring of keys to the locked chests in areas 3D and 4C.

*Lava Basin:* Behind the throne, lava pours from the mouth of a 7-foot-diameter stone skull into a 5-foot-deep basin. A 2-foot-high basalt ledge encloses the basin and prevents the lava from spilling onto the

floor, and holes at the bottom of the basin funnel away the lava. Any creature that enters the basin or starts its turn there takes 15 fire damage and ongoing 15 fire damage (save ends). A creature can take this damage only once per turn.

*Levers:* Two heavy iron levers are set into the floor near Snurre's throne; the squares they occupy are difficult terrain. Pulling a lever requires a DC 17 Athletics check (standard action). Pulling the northern lever opens the secret door leading to area 4B. Pulling the southern lever triggers the inferno pillars trap (see below).

*Secret Door:* A character who makes a DC 20 Perception check spots this stone door hidden behind Snurre's throne. The door is locked and can be opened by pulling the nearby iron lever (see above) or by making a DC 32 Thievery check.

**2D. North Hall:** This branch of the main hall is slightly narrower and lined with bas-relief carvings of fire giants. At the north end of the hall, a statue of King Snurre stands in an alcove. The 13-foot-tall statue is carved from red-veined black marble, and it is flanked by basalt braziers filled with flaming oil.

**Tactics:** The king has lost too many powerful allies of late, and he rightly assumes that the characters are responsible. He does not negotiate with enemies in his own hall and fights to the death.

As enemies approach the throne, the knights hurl throwing hammers and then protect the king by using *flame's lure* to pull enemies toward them. Azer hallwardens emerge from behind the iron curtains, near the 2A notation and from near the entrance of 2D, and attack, staying in close formation to benefit from *warding flame*.

Snurre releases the hell hounds and throws his *iron net* when enemies come within 5 squares of him. He then uses *king's assault* followed by *double attack*. When Snurre is first bloodied, he or one of his servants pulls the lever that activates the inferno pillars trap. Taz'zt is likely to do so before fleeing the scene.

Taz'zt is a member of the drow House of Tormtor, which is allied with the House of Eilservs. Eclavdra, a drow priestess of the House of Eilservs, uses Taz'zt to keep an eye on Snurre while she focuses her attention on the Temple of the Elder Elemental Eye (area 15). Taz'zt uses *darkfire* on an enemy and then tries to take down that enemy with poisoned crossbow bolts. If he or Snurre is bloodied, he flees to area 15, using *shadow form* to move through obstacles such as secret doors and giant-sized doors.

He flees through area 4 to area 11, then takes the most direct route to area 15. Once there, he joins Eclavdra on the balcony overlooking the Temple of the Elder Elemental Eye. Because he fears being held up in his escape, he warns none of the giants along the path of his flight.

**2 Firebred Hell Hounds** **Level 17 Brute**
Large elemental beast (fire) XP 1,600 each

**HP** 205; **Bloodied** 102 **Initiative** +10
**AC** 29, **Fortitude** 30, **Reflex** 28, **Will** 29 **Perception** +17
**Speed** 8
**Resist** 15 fire

**Traits**

☼ **Fire Shield** (fire) ✦ **Aura** 1
Any enemy that enters the aura or starts its turn there takes 1d10 fire damage. A creature can take this damage only once per turn.

**Standard Actions**

⊕ **Bite** (fire) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 2 (one creature); +22 vs. AC
*Hit:* 2d10 + 14 damage plus 1d12 fire damage.

✧ **Fiery Breath** (fire) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⚅
*Attack:* Close blast 3 (creatures in the blast); +20 vs. Reflex
*Hit:* 3d10 + 15 fire damage.

✧ **Fiery Burst** (fire) ✦ **Encounter**
*Attack:* Close burst 1 (creatures in the burst); +20 vs. Reflex
*Hit:* 4d10 + 15 fire damage.

**Str** 22 (+14) **Dex** 14 (+10) **Wis** 19 (+12)
**Con** 25 (+15) **Int** 2 (+4) **Cha** 12 (+9)
**Alignment** unaligned **Languages** –

**Snurre, Fire Giant King** **Level 20 Elite Soldier (Leader)**
Large elemental humanoid (fire, giant) XP 5,600

**HP** 382; **Bloodied** 191 **Initiative** +12
**AC** 36, **Fortitude** 34, **Reflex** 29, **Will** 31 **Perception** +17
**Speed** 7
**Resist** 15 fire
**Saving Throws** +2; **Action Points** 1

**Traits**

☼ **Fiery Defender** (fire) ✦ **Aura** 2
While in the aura, an unmarked enemy that uses an attack power that fails to target a creature that has this aura active takes 15 fire damage.

☼ **Fiery Majesty** ✦ **Aura** 3
While Snurre is not bloodied, allies in the aura gain a +2 power bonus to attack rolls and are immune to fear effects.

**Royal Resolve**
If Snurre would be dazed, dominated, or stunned, he can make a saving throw to immediately end the effect, including an effect that a save cannot normally end.

**Standard Actions**

⊕ **Fiery Greatsword** (fire, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 2 (one creature); +25 vs. AC
*Hit:* 3d12 + 9 fire damage.

⸸ **Double Attack** ✦ **At-Will**
*Effect:* Snurre uses *fiery greatsword* twice.

⸸ **King's Assault** (fire, weapon) ✦ **Recharge** when first bloodied
*Effect:* Snurre moves up to his speed, and during the move he gains a +4 bonus to all defenses and can move through enemies' spaces. Each time Snurre enters an enemy's space for the first time during the move, he makes the following attack against that enemy. At the end of the move, he can use *fiery greatsword.*
*Attack:* Melee 0 (one enemy); +25 vs. AC
*Hit:* 3d12 + 9 fire damage, and the target falls prone.

✲ **Iron Net** (fire, weapon) ✦ **Encounter**
*Attack:* Area burst 1 within 5 (creatures in the burst); +23 vs. Reflex
*Hit:* 2d8 + 16 fire damage, and ongoing 10 fire damage and the target is restrained (save ends both).

**Skills** Diplomacy +20, Dungeoneering +17, Insight +17, Intimidate +20
**Str** 26 (+18) **Dex** 11 (+10) **Wis** 14 (+12)
**Con** 23 (+16) **Int** 14 (+12) **Cha** 20 (+15)
**Alignment** evil **Languages** Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Giant
**Equipment** plate armor, greatsword, iron net, black iron crown, white dragonhide cloak

**3 Fire Giant Knights** **Level 19 Soldier**
Large elemental humanoid (fire, giant) XP 2,400 each

**HP** 182; **Bloodied** 91 **Initiative** +13
**AC** 35, **Fortitude** 34, **Reflex** 29, **Will** 29 **Perception** +14
**Speed** 7
**Resist** 15 fire

**Traits**

☼ **Fiery Defender** (fire) ✦ **Aura** 2
While in the aura, an unmarked enemy that uses an attack power that fails to target a creature that has this aura active takes 15 fire damage.

**Standard Actions**

⨺ **Longsword** (fire, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 2 (one creature); +24 vs. AC
*Hit:* 2d10 + 16 fire damage.

➳ **Throwing Hammer** (fire, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Ranged 10 (one creature); +24 vs. AC
*Hit:* 2d8 + 16 fire damage, and the target falls prone.

✧ **Flame's Lure** (fire) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞
*Attack:* Close burst 3 (enemies in the burst); +22 vs. Will
*Hit:* The giant slides the target up to 3 squares into a space adjacent to the giant, and the target takes ongoing 15 fire damage (save ends).

**Str** 24 (+16) **Dex** 14 (+11) **Wis** 10 (+9)
**Con** 22 (+15) **Int** 10 (+9) **Cha** 14 (+11)

**Alignment** evil **Languages** Common, Giant
**Equipment** plate armor, light shield, longsword, 3 throwing hammers

**8 Azer Hallwardens** **Level 17 Minion Soldier**
Medium elemental humanoid (fire) XP 400 each

**HP** 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. **Initiative** +13
**AC** 33, **Fortitude** 31, **Reflex** 28, **Will** 29 **Perception** +12
**Speed** 5
**Resist** 20 fire

**Traits**

**Warding Flame** (fire)
Any enemy that starts its turn adjacent to two or more azers that have this trait takes 5 fire damage.

**Standard Actions**

⨺ **Warhammer** (fire, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 1 (one creature); +22 vs. AC
*Hit:* 8 damage plus 5 fire damage.

**Str** 21 (+13) **Dex** 17 (+11) **Wis** 18 (+12)
**Con** 23 (+14) **Int** 11 (+8) **Cha** 16 (+11)

**Alignment** unaligned **Languages** Dwarven, Giant
**Equipment** chainmail, light shield, warhammer

**Drow Infiltrator** **Level 15 Lurker**
Medium fey humanoid XP 1,200

**HP** 107; **Bloodied** 53 **Initiative** +17
**AC** 29, **Fortitude** 26, **Reflex** 28, **Will** 27 **Perception** +13
**Speed** 6 Darkvision

**Traits**

**Shadow Strike** (necrotic)
If the drow starts its turn insubstantial, it gains a +2 power bonus to attack rolls and its first hit with an attack during the turn deals 4d10 extra necrotic damage.

**Standard Actions**

⨺ **Short Sword** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 1 (one creature); +20 vs. AC
*Hit:* 3d6 + 13 damage.

➳ **Hand Crossbow** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Ranged 10 (one creature); +20 vs. AC
*Hit:* 3d6 + 13 damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).
*First Failed Saving Throw:* The target is also weakened (save ends both).
*Second Failed Saving Throw:* The target instead falls unconscious until the end of the encounter.

**Shadow Form** ✦ **At-Will**
*Effect:* The drow becomes insubstantial and gains phasing until the end of its next turn or until it attacks.

**Minor Actions**

➳ **Darkfire** ✦ **Encounter**
*Attack:* Ranged 10 (one creature); +18 vs. Reflex
*Hit:* The target grants combat advantage and cannot benefit from invisibility or concealment until the end of the drow's next turn.

**Skills** Bluff +17, Diplomacy +17, Insight +13, Stealth +18
**Str** 16 (+10) **Dex** 22 (+13) **Wis** 13 (+8)
**Con** 11 (+7) **Int** 15 (+9) **Cha** 20 (+12)

**Alignment** evil **Languages** Common, Elven, Giant
**Equipment** leather armor, short sword, hand crossbow, 20 bolts

### Inferno Pillars

The obsidian columns in area 2A are hollow and don't actually support the ceiling. They are built atop small holes that lead down to a natural gas reservoir beneath the throne hall, and numerous valves inside the pillars keep the gas from escaping until the inferno pillars trap is activated. Characters who inspect the pillars closely might notice that they're part of a trap (see the trap's statistics for details).

| **Inferno Pillars** | **Level 18 Trap** |
|---|---|
| Object | XP 2,000 |
| **Detect** see Identify below | **Initiative** – |
| **Immune** attacks | |
| **Identify** (Dungeoneering) | |
| ✦ **DC 23:** The character concludes that the pillars aren't necessary for supporting the ceiling of the hall. | |
| ✦ **DC 32:** The character realizes that the pillars are hollow and might be a trap. | |
| STANDARD ACTIONS | |
| **Blazing Inferno** (fire) ✦ **Daily** | |
| *Requirement:* A creature must use a standard action and succeed on a DC 17 Athletics check to pull the trap's activating lever. | |
| *Effect:* Flame fills an 8-square-by-8-square zone centered on each pillar. Each zone is 2 squares high. Any creature that ends its turn in one or more zones takes 10 fire damage. The zones persist until the trap depletes its natural gas supply (5 rounds) or until the activating lever is returned to its off position. | |
| COUNTERMEASURES | |
| ✦ **Deactivate Pillar:** While adjacent to a pillar, Dungeoneering or Thievery DC 23 (standard action) or DC 32 (minor action). *Success:* The character deactivates the pillar until the end of the character's next turn. | |
| ✦ **Jam Lever:** While adjacent to the lever in the off position, Thievery DC 23 (standard action) or DC 32 (minor action). *Success:* The character jams the lever in the off position. Pulling the jammed lever to trigger the trap then requires a DC 32 Athletics check. | |
| ✦ **Pull Lever:** While adjacent to the lever in the on position, Athletics DC 17 (standard action) or DC 23 (minor action). *Success:* The character pulls the lever to the off position. | |

### Development

Slaying the fire giant king and delivering his head to Krombaalt, the storm giant lord, completes a major quest (see "Quests," page 2).

After defeating King Snurre, if the characters leave the hall to take an extended rest, they find Snurre's surviving allies waiting for them upon their return. Assuming he lives, Obmi Ironwhisper (the king's dwarf advisor) confers with the drow and reluctantly releases the fire giant Boldo from prison in area 13. Boldo is tasked with organizing the hall's defenses. He pulls forces from area 6, areas 9–11, and area 14, and he stations them throughout the throne hall. Queen Frupy, enraged that she wasn't consulted, confines herself to her royal quarters (area 3D) and waits for a chance to gain revenge.

## 3. Royal Chambers

**Combat Encounter Level 20 (15,200 XP)**

Under normal circumstances, four azers guard the hallway (area 3A) while the others sleep in their quarters (area 3C). If the azers hear sounds of combat in area 2, they take up positions guarding the doors inside the queen's quarters (area 3D). The fire giant queen is always in her quarters, attended by her handmaidens (female fire giant knights) and her fiendish dire weasel pets.

**Perception DC 23:** If Queen Frupy knows the characters are coming, anyone who listens at the doors to area 3D and succeeds on the check hears her bellowing as she vows to unleash her wrath upon the intruders who dare to invade her husband's stronghold.

**Light:** Bright light (torches and braziers).

**Monsters:** Frupy, 2 fire giant knights, 2 fiendish dire weasels, 8 azer hallwardens.

**Trap:** Soul mirror.

**When the characters see area 3A, read:**
*At each end of this vaulted hall stands an enormous pair of iron doors. Life-sized statues of fire giant warriors stand in alcoves along the hall, and torches in iron brackets are mounted on the walls between them.*

Refer to the azers if they are in the hall.

**When the characters see area 3D, read:**
*Two basalt braziers set into the walls contain flaming pools of oil that illuminate the western half of this regal chamber. Rich metal tapestries hang on the walls, and the floor is tiled in polished obsidian. Torches mounted in iron brackets reveal a giant iron bed against the eastern wall of the room. A huge displacer beast skin lies on the floor in front of the bed, and two oversized, iron-banded wooden chests flank the bed.*

*A stone wardrobe stands against the northern wall. Mounted to the southern wall is an enormous mirror in a hideous iron frame sculpted to resemble screaming faces. The mirror, which is thirty feet high and twenty feet wide, makes the room look even bigger. Standing in front of the mirror is a female giant clad in black dragonhide garments. Her scowling face is a mass of jowls and wrinkles, and her body is lumpy and gross, but her little pig eyes are bright with intelligence and cunning. Two female fire giants in plate armor attend her, and two outsized weasels lurk in her shadow.*

Refer to the azers if they are in the queen's quarters.

**When Frupy sees the characters, read:**
*The queen hoists a smoldering iron scepter and screams, "DESTROY THEM!"*

The ceiling is 30 feet high in area 3A, 40 feet high in areas 3B and 3C, and 50 feet high in area 3D.

**3A. Hall of Statues:** This hall is lined with alcoves that contain 12-foot-tall stone statues of fire giant warriors. The statues are blocking terrain.

**3B. Knight Barracks:** This room contains iron beds for the fire giant knights and some azers.

**3C. Azer Barracks:** The azers bunk in the iron-wrought beds here.

**3D. Royal Bedchamber:** The queen is a sly and cunning horror, an ugly creature that regards the characters with utter contempt. She cannot be reasoned with and attacks intruders on sight.

Basalt braziers filled with flaming oil illuminate the room, which contains many interesting features, most notably Queen Frupy's giant wall mirror (see "Frupy's Mirror" below). A large stone wardrobe contains cloaks, boots, and other metal apparel belonging to the fire giant king and queen. The garments are nonmagical.

*Secret Door:* A secret door is hidden behind a tapestry, but it is locked. Cranking a nearby torch bracket 45 degrees clockwise causes the secret door to swing open (a fact that characters can determine by making a DC 32 Perception check). The door can also be unlocked by making a DC 32 Thievery check.

**Treasure:** Frupy wears four pieces of jewelry, each worth 1,500 gp.

Four tapestries of precious metal, each worth 1,500 gp, hang on the walls. The skin of the displacer beast pack lord on the floor has seen better days but still is worth 500 gp. The rest of the treasure is kept in two large, locked chests made of iron-reinforced wood. Snurre and Frupy each carry a key that opens both chests. A successful DC 24 Thievery check is required to open either chest without the key.

The northern chest holds a matching pair of crystal goblets (1,500 gp), a gold-inlaid scabbard studded with gems (1,500 gp), a sack containing 120 pp and three 5,000-gp gems, and assorted mundane items (see "Treasure," page 3).

The southern chest contains a platinum necklace set with a star opal (15,000 gp), a gold dragon mask with red crystal eyes (7,500 gp), five pieces of jewelry (5,000 gp each), ten gold rings (1,000 gp each), and two *potions of vitality*.

**Tactics:** If alerted by the sounds of battle and the echoing tirades of her husband, Frupy orders her handmaidens to prepare for combat. When enemies approach, Frupy uses her mirror to capture as many of them as possible. When forced to do so, Frupy bashes the nearest enemy with her *iron scepter*. She refuses to retreat or yield to anyone.

The knights protect their queen, keeping enemies close to them with *flame's lure*. Meanwhile, the fiendish dire weasels use *skitter* to move around the battlefield and gain combat advantage.

The azers stay in close formation to reap the benefit of *warding flame*.

All the creatures here are willing to die rather than leave the queen undefended.

| **Frupy, Fire Giant Queen** | **Level 18 Brute** |
|---|---|
| Large elemental humanoid (fire, giant) | XP 2,000 |
| **HP** 212; **Bloodied** 106 | **Initiative** +9 |
| **AC** 30, **Fortitude** 31, **Reflex** 26, **Will** 29 | **Perception** +10 |
| **Speed** 7 | |
| **Resist** 15 fire | |
| STANDARD ACTIONS | |
| ⊕ **Iron Scepter** (fire, weapon) ✦ **At-Will** | |
| *Attack:* Melee 2 (one creature); +23 vs. AC | |
| *Hit:* 3d10 + 16 fire damage, or 3d10 + 23 fire damage if Frupy is bloodied. | |
| TRIGGERED ACTIONS | |
| **Queen's Wrath** ✦ **Recharge** when Frupy deals no damage on her turn | |
| *Trigger:* An enemy within 2 squares of Frupy hits her with an attack. | |
| *Effect (Immediate Reaction):* Frupy uses *iron scepter* on the triggering enemy, dealing half damage on a miss. | |
| **Skills** Intimidate +17 | |
| **Str** 22 (+15) **Dex** 11 (+9) **Wis** 13 (+10) | |
| **Con** 22 (+15) **Int** 13 (+10) **Cha** 16 (+12) | |
| **Alignment** evil **Languages** Common, Giant | |
| **Equipment** black dragonhide garments, iron scepter | |

**2 Fire Giant Knights** **Level 19 Soldier**
Large elemental humanoid (fire, giant) XP 2,400 each

**HP** 182; **Bloodied** 91 **Initiative** +13
**AC** 35, **Fortitude** 34, **Reflex** 29, **Will** 29 **Perception** +14
**Speed** 7
**Resist** 15 fire

**Traits**

☼ **Fiery Defender** (fire) ✦ **Aura** 2
While in the aura, an unmarked enemy that uses an attack power that fails to target a creature that has this aura active takes 15 fire damage.

**Standard Actions.**

⊕ **Longsword** (fire, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 2 (one creature); +24 vs. AC
*Hit:* 2d10 + 16 fire damage.

↛ **Throwing Hammer** (fire, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Ranged 10 (one creature); +24 vs. AC
*Hit:* 2d8 + 16 fire damage, and the target falls prone.

✧ **Flame's Lure** (fire) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞
*Attack:* Close burst 3 (enemies in the burst); +22 vs. Will
*Hit:* The giant slides the target up to 3 squares into a space adjacent to the giant, and the target takes ongoing 15 fire damage (save ends).

**Str** 24 (+16) **Dex** 14 (+11) **Wis** 10 (+9)
**Con** 22 (+15) **Int** 10 (+9) **Cha** 14 (+11)

**Alignment** evil **Languages** Common, Giant
**Equipment** plate armor, light shield, longsword, 3 throwing hammers

**2 Fiendish Dire Weasels** **Level 17 Skirmisher**
Medium elemental beast XP 1,600 each

**HP** 162; **Bloodied** 81 **Initiative** +16
**AC** 31, **Fortitude** 29, **Reflex** 30, **Will** 28 **Perception** +15
**Speed** 8 Darkvision
**Resist** 15 fire

**Standard Actions**

⊕ **Bite** ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 1 (one creature); +22 vs. AC
*Hit:* 3d6 + 14 damage, and if the target is granting combat advantage to the weasel, ongoing 10 damage (save ends).

**Move Actions**

**Skitter** ✦ **At-Will**
*Effect:* The weasel shifts up to half its speed, and it can shift through enemy spaces.

**Str** 15 (+10) **Dex** 22 (+14) **Wis** 15 (+10)
**Con** 18 (+12) **Int** 3 (+4) **Cha** 10 (+8)

**Alignment** evil **Languages** –

**8 Azer Hallwardens** **Level 17 Minion Soldier**
Medium elemental humanoid (fire) XP 400 each

**HP** 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. **Initiative** +13
**AC** 33, **Fortitude** 31, **Reflex** 28, **Will** 29 **Perception** +12
**Speed** 5
**Resist** 20 fire

**Traits**

**Warding Flame** (fire)
Any enemy that starts its turn adjacent to two or more azers that have this trait takes 5 fire damage.

**Standard Actions**

⊕ **Warhammer** (fire, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 1 (one creature); +22 vs. AC
*Hit:* 8 damage plus 5 fire damage.

**Str** 21 (+13) **Dex** 17 (+11) **Wis** 18 (+12)
**Con** 23 (+14) **Int** 11 (+8) **Cha** 16 (+11)

**Alignment** unaligned **Languages** Dwarven, Giant
**Equipment** chainmail, light shield, warhammer

## Frupy's Mirror

Frupy must activate the soul mirror on her turn; it has no actions of its own.

**Soul Mirror** **Level 18 Trap**
Object XP 2,000

**Detect** automatic **Initiative** –
**HP** 150
**AC** 31, **Fortitude** 30, **Reflex** 18, **Will** –
**Immune** cold, fire, necrotic, poison, psychic, radiant, forced movement, all conditions, ongoing damage

**Identify** (Arcana; trained only)
✦ **DC 23:** The character realizes that the mirror can trap creatures in extradimensional cells but also realizes that the Arcana skill can be used to free such creatures.
✦ **DC 32:** Breaking the mirror frees the creatures trapped within. A prisoner might also be able to trick the mirror into releasing it.

**Standard Actions**

↛ **Trap Soul** ✦ **At-Will**
*Requirement:* The mirror's owner must activate this power and must be able to see the mirror to do so.
*Attack:* Ranged 20 (one creature that the mirror's owner can see); +21 vs. Will
*Hit:* The target is trapped in an extradimensional space and removed from play. While trapped, the target has neither line of effect nor line of sight to any other creature, and other creatures have neither line of sight nor line of effect to the target. A trapped creature freed from the mirror appears in a space adjacent to the mirror or in the nearest unoccupied space.

**Countermeasures**

✦ **Escape:** Insight DC 23 (standard action) or DC 32 (minor action). *Success:* The trapped creature escapes the mirror. The mirror's owner takes 10 psychic damage each time a trapped creature escapes in this manner. *Failure (by 5 or more):* The trapped creature takes 10 psychic damage.
✦ **Release:** While adjacent to the mirror, (trained only) Arcana DC 23 (standard action) or DC 32 (minor action). *Success:* The character touches the mirror and commands it to release one trapped creature mentioned by name. *Failure (by 5 or more):* The character takes 10 psychic damage.
✦ **Shatter:** If the mirror is reduced to 0 hit points, all those trapped within are released.

## Development

At your discretion, there might be other creatures trapped in Frupy's mirror, and destroying the mirror might free them. One of the trapped creatures could be an NPC with a quest or a disgruntled servant who displeased Frupy and who knows a great deal about the layout of the king's hall.

# 4. King's Treasury

**Combat Encounter Level 19 (12,000 XP)**

This rough-hewn area is hidden behind secret doors.

**Light:** None. Torches are mounted in 10-foot-high iron brackets along the walls at regular intervals, but they are unlit.

**Monsters:** Volcanic iron golem.

**When the characters see area 4C, read:**
*This naturally formed cave is empty except for five large iron chests pushed against the walls.*

King Snurre commanded Zarkad, the fire giant blacksmith (see area 12), to craft an iron golem in his image. Snurre then placed the construct in this vault to guard his treasure. The iron golem is the spitting image of the fire giant king, complete with iron greatsword and crown.

The walls here are natural stone. The ceiling in the tunnel (areas 4A and 4B) is 20 feet high but rises to a height of 30 feet in areas 4C and 4D.

**4A. Secret Door:** This secret door is locked from the southern side but can be opened by turning a nearby torch bracket (in area 3D) clockwise. Creatures on the northern side of the door can open it normally.

**4B. Secret Door:** This secret door is locked from the western side but can be opened by pulling the iron lever south of the king's throne (in area 2C). Creatures on the eastern side of the door can open it normally.

**4C. Treasure Vault:** This cave contains five locked iron chests, within which Snurre keeps his treasure. Tampering with the chests activates the iron golem hidden in area 4D. An illusory wall conceals area 4D and the golem within. This wall looks like a naturally formed rock wall on both sides. The illusory wall blocks line of sight, but tactile examination of the wall reveals that it isn't real. Creatures "inside" the wall can see out both sides as though the wall wasn't there. The iron golem does not perceive the wall.

Snurre carries the keys to the chests, each of which can also be opened with a successful DC 24 Thievery check. If any creature other than Snurre opens one of the chests, a magical chime sounds and prompts the iron golem to attack. A character can make a DC 33 Arcana check to detect the magical chime on a chest, and a character trained in Arcana can disarm it (DC 33). Failure by 5 or more on the check to disarm the chime sets off the chime.

Chest 1 contains a +5 *resounding warhammer* (or another level 22 uncommon or rare magic item), a folded *portable hole* (or another level 19 common or uncommon magic item), and 320 pp.

Chest 2 contains a +5 *magic wand* (or another level 21 common or uncommon magic item), a golden crown set with gems (15,000 gp), a crystal gong affixed to a gold stand (7,500 gp), and 3,000 gp.

Chest 3 contains a suit of *+4 deathcut leather armor* (or another level 20 common or uncommon magic item) resting atop a bed of 15,000 gp.

Chest 4 holds a mithral tiara set with an astral diamond (15,000 gp), a gold statuette depicting Corellon and Lolth embracing (7,500 gp), two matching platinum bracers (10,000 gp for the set), and 6,000 gp.

Chest 5 contains 17 gems (1,000 gp each) scattered among 15,000 gp.

**4D. Golem:** Zarkad, the fire giant blacksmith, fashioned a special iron golem in Snurre's likeness. The golem guards the treasure in area 4C and also attacks intruders that attempt to pass through this cave. A twisting staircase with giant-sized steps descends 75 feet to area 11. The stairs are difficult terrain to creatures ascending them or normal terrain to creatures descending them.

**Tactics:** The iron golem attacks when a creature other than King Snurre opens one of the chests in area 4C or when an enemy enters area 4D. The golem considers fire giants, azers, Obmi Ironwhisper, or any creatures accompanying these to be allies. It gives unaccompanied drow a moment to leave the area.

The iron golem uses *volcanic breath* as often as possible. On its turn, it moves to stay near as many enemies as possible. Once bloodied, the golem begins to leak its toxic heated innards, making its aura more dangerous.

The golem pursues fleeing enemies as far as the secret doors, but it does not cross those thresholds, instead returning to area 4D if it has no one to attack.

| **Volcanic Iron Golem** | **Level 19 Solo Soldier** |
|---|---|
| Large natural animate (construct) | XP 12,000 |
| **HP** 740; **Bloodied** 370 | **Initiative** +16 |
| **AC** 35, **Fortitude** 34, **Reflex** 30, **Will** 29 | **Perception** +13 |
| **Speed** 6 (cannot shift) | Darkvision, blindsight 3 |
| **Immune** charm, dazed, disease, poison, stunned; **Resist** 15 fire | |
| **Saving Throws** +5; **Action Points** 2 | |

**Traits**

**Volcanic Halo** (fire, poison) ✦ **Aura** 2
Any creature that willingly enters or leaves the aura takes 15 fire and poison damage, or 20 fire and poison damage while the golem is bloodied. Creatures in the aura have partial concealment against creatures outside the aura.

**Energizing Flames**
The first time the golem takes fire damage each turn, it can shift up to half its speed as a free action, even if it could not normally shift.

**Standard Actions**

**Iron Blade** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 2 (one creature); +24 vs. AC
*Hit:* 3d12 + 8 damage, and the target is slowed until the end of the golem's next turn.

**Double Attack** ✦ **At-Will**
*Effect:* The golem uses *iron blade* twice.

**Volcanic Breath** (fire, poison) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⚅
*Attack:* Close blast 5 (creatures in the blast); +22 vs. Reflex
*Hit:* 4d10 + 16 fire and poison damage.
*Miss:* Half damage.

**Triggered Actions**

**Iron Rain** ✦ **At-Will**
*Trigger:* An enemy starts its turn within 2 squares of the golem.
*Effect (Free Action):* The golem uses *iron blade* on the triggering enemy.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Str** 27 (+17) | **Dex** 21 (+14) | **Wis** 18 (+13) |
| **Con** 25 (+16) | **Int** 3 (+5) | **Cha** 3 (+5) |
| **Alignment** unaligned | **Languages** – | |

# 5. Dining Hall and Kitchen

**Combat Encounter Level 17 (8,000 XP)**

Sulfuria the fire giant cook reigns here, overseeing the preparation of meals for the fire giant king and his subjects.

**Perception DC 17:** The character hears Sulfuria barking orders in Giant to her azer servants.

**Light:** Bright light (torches and flame shard).

**Monsters:** Sulfuria (fire giant lavamaster), 1 seething flame shard, 6 azer servants.

**Trap:** Billowing cauldron.

**When the characters see area 5A, read:**
*Beyond the great iron doors is a stifling dining hall with an enormous polished obsidian table surrounded by eight chairs. A black stone basin contains lava that fills the room with an orange glow. The lava enters the basin through cracks in the back wall. Another set of iron doors provides the only other exit.*

**If the characters see area 5B, read:**
*The doors open into a hot kitchen bustling with activity. Half a dozen fire-haired dwarves scramble about, weaving between cluttered obsidian tables and piles of crates and barrels. A female fire giant wearing an iron-scale apron bosses them around while stirring the contents of a nine-foot-wide steaming iron cauldron. A hammer hangs at her hip.*

*Floating behind the cauldron above a magic circle inscribed on the floor is a fiery red crystal shard about six feet tall and half as wide. Ripples of heat emanate from the shard, heating the cauldron and the area around it.*

The ceilings are 40 feet high in areas 5A and 5B, and 20 feet high in areas 5C and 5D.

**5A. Dining Hall:** This chamber is where the king and queen have guests for dinner. A large stone table surrounded by giant-sized chairs dominates the hall.

*Lava Basin:* Lava pours through cracks in the western wall, filling a 5-foot-deep lava basin. A 2-foot-high basalt ledge encloses the basin and prevents the lava from spilling onto the dining hall floor, and holes at the bottom of the basin funnel away the lava. Any creature that enters the basin or starts its turn there takes 15 fire damage and ongoing 15 fire damage (save ends). A creature can take this damage only once per turn.

**5B. Kitchen:** Sulfuria runs a tight ship and keeps her azer servants busy throughout the day. The centerpiece of the kitchen is a great iron cauldron. An elemental creature known as a flame shard provides the heat. A character who has training in Arcana can deduce that the magic circle confines the flame shard, likely against its will.

**5C. Sulfuria's Quarters:** The fire giant cook sleeps here. Next to her large iron bed rests a locked wooden chest. Sulfuria carries the key, but the lock can be picked with a DC 23 Thievery check. Inside the chest, Sulfuria keeps 250 gp in an oversized pouch. The chest also contains assorted mundane items (see "Treasure," page 3).

**5D. Pantry:** This room contains crates of foodstuffs, barrels of water, casks of oil and wine, kegs of ale and spices, and sacks of grain. Most of these containers were stolen from dwarf and human settlements and are branded with the emblems of their rightful owners. Squares occupied by provisions are treated as difficult terrain.

**Tactics:** As soon as she sees intruders, Sulfuria orders the azers to attack. They gang up on single targets, using their *warding flame* to burn enemies.

On her first turn, Sulfuria throws some special ingredients into the cauldron, triggering the trap (see "Billowing Cauldron" below). On subsequent turns, she lashes and smashes enemies (she has a hammer, or "tenderizer," instead of a greatsword). Once bloodied, Sulfuria opens the doors to area 6A and calls for the fire giants there.

The flame shard is bound and immobilized in a magic circle inscribed on the floor beneath it. While

bound within the circle, it attacks Sulfuria's enemies with its *burning shard* and *flame burst* powers. If it is subjected to forced movement and knocked out of the circle, or if the circle is broken with a DC 23 Arcana check or Thievery check, the flame shard can move about freely. Although the flame shard despises its captors, it realizes it would have a hard time hurting them and fears punishment, so it continues to fight on their side. (It might occasionally catch Sulfuria in a *flame burst*.) If Sulfuria and her allies are defeated, however, the shard stops attacking and looks for an opportunity to escape.

**6 Azer Servants** **Level 17 Minion Skirmisher**
Medium elemental humanoid (fire) XP 400 each

**HP** 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. **Initiative** +14
**AC** 31, **Fortitude** 31, **Reflex** 29, **Will** 29 **Perception** +12
**Speed** 5
**Resist** 20 fire

**Traits**

**Warding Flame** (fire)
Any enemy that starts its turn adjacent to two or more azers that have this trait takes 5 fire damage.

**Standard Actions**

⊕ **Warhammer** (fire, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Effect:* The azer shifts 2 squares before or after making the attack.
*Attack:* Melee 1 (one creature); +22 vs. AC
*Hit:* 8 damage plus 5 fire damage.

**Triggered Actions**

**Move Like Fire** ✦ **Encounter**
*Trigger:* A close attack or area attack hits or misses the azer.
*Effect (Immediate Interrupt):* The azer shifts up to its speed.

**Str** 19 (+12) **Dex** 18 (+12) **Wis** 18 (+12)
**Con** 23 (+14) **Int** 11 (+8) **Cha** 13 (+9)

**Alignment** unaligned **Languages** Dwarven, Giant
**Equipment** chainmail, warhammer

**Fire Giant Lavamaster** **Level 17 Controller (Leader)**
Large elemental humanoid (fire, giant) XP 1,600

**HP** 164; **Bloodied** 82 **Initiative** +12
**AC** 31, **Fortitude** 31, **Reflex** 27, **Will** 28 **Perception** +13
**Speed** 8
**Resist** 15 fire

**Traits**

☼ **Hearthflames** (fire, healing) ✦ **Aura** 2
Any enemy that ends its turn in the aura takes 10 fire damage. Any bloodied ally that starts its turn in the aura regains 10 hit points.

**Standard Actions**

⊕ **Molten Sword** (fire, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 2 (one creature); +22 vs. AC
*Hit:* 2d10 + 14 fire damage.

**Magma Lash** (fire) ✦ **Recharge** when no creature is grabbed by the lavamaster
*Attack:* Ranged 5 (one creature); +20 vs. Reflex
*Hit:* 2d8 + 10 fire damage, and the lavamaster pulls the target up to 4 squares. If the target ends the movement adjacent to the lavamaster, it is grabbed by the lavamaster (escape DC 23).

**Magma Burst** (fire, zone) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Area burst 1 within 10 (enemies in the burst); +20 vs. Fortitude
*Hit:* 2d6 + 10 fire damage.
*Effect:* The burst creates a zone of difficult terrain that lasts until the end of the lavamaster's next turn. Any enemy that enters the zone or ends its turn there takes 10 fire damage. A creature can take this damage only once per turn.

**Triggered Actions**

**Fiery Vendetta** ✦ **At-Will**
*Trigger:* An enemy grabbed by the lavamaster attacks it.
*Effect (Immediate Reaction):* The lavamaster or one of its allies can make a melee basic attack against the triggering enemy as a free action.

**Str** 24 (+15) **Dex** 19 (+12) **Wis** 21 (+13)
**Con** 20 (+13) **Int** 15 (+10) **Cha** 16 (+11)

**Alignment** evil **Languages** Giant
**Equipment** chainmail, greatsword

**Seething Flame Shard** **Level 18 Artillery**
Medium elemental magical beast (fire) XP 2,000

**HP** 136; **Bloodied** 68 **Initiative** +16
**AC** 32, **Fortitude** 29, **Reflex** 31, **Will** 29 **Perception** +12
**Speed** 4, fly 4 (hover) Darkvision
**Immune** disease, poison; **Resist** 15 fire

**Traits**

☼ **Heat Waves** (fire) ✦ **Aura** 2
Enemies in the aura take a -2 penalty to saving throws against fire effects. Any enemy that ends its turn in the aura takes 10 fire damage.

**Standard Actions**

⊕ **Burning Shard** (fire) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 1 (one creature); +21 vs. Reflex
*Hit:* 2d8 + 7 fire damage, and ongoing 10 fire damage (save ends).

**Flame Burst** (fire) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Area burst 1 within 10 (creatures in the burst); +23 vs. Reflex
*Hit:* Ongoing 20 fire damage (save ends).

**Triggered Actions**

**Flame Shatter** (fire) ✦ **Encounter**
*Trigger:* The shard drops to 0 hit points.
*Attack (No Action):* Close burst 2 (creatures in the burst); +21 vs. Reflex
*Hit:* 1d8 + 6 fire damage, and ongoing 10 fire damage (save ends).

**Str** 19 (+13) **Dex** 25 (+16) **Wis** 16 (+12)
**Con** 22 (+15) **Int** 7 (+7) **Cha** 22 (+15)

**Alignment** chaotic evil **Languages** Abyssal, Common

## Billowing Cauldron

When certain foul ingredients are tossed into Sulfuria's iron cauldron, it spews poisonous fumes that coalesce into grasping green tendrils.

| **Billowing Cauldron** | **Level 18 Trap** |
|---|---|
| Object | XP 2,000 |
| **Detect** automatic | **Initiative** – |
| **HP** 170 | |
| **AC** 30, **Fortitude** 30, **Reflex** 15, **Will** – | |
| **Immune** cold, fire, necrotic, poison, psychic, radiant, forced movement, all conditions, ongoing damage | |
| **Identify** (Arcana; trained only) | |
| ✦ **DC 32:** Arcane symbols carved into the cauldron suggest that it might be a trap. | |
| **Identify** (Perception) | |
| ✦ **DC 17:** The character notices arcane symbols carved into the cauldron. | |
| **Standard Actions** | |
| ✧ **Poisonous Tendrils** (poison, zone) ✦ **Encounter** | |
| *Requirement:* The cauldron's owner must activate this power and must be adjacent to the cauldron to do so. | |
| *Effect:* Close burst 3; the burst creates a zone that lasts until the end of the encounter. Any enemy that ends its turn in the zone takes 10 poison damage. | |
| **Countermeasures** | |
| ✦ **Command:** (Trained only) Arcana DC 23 (standard action) or DC 32 (minor action). *Success:* The character commands the tendrils to withdraw into the cauldron, negating the zone's damage until the end of the character's next turn. | |
| ✦ **Destroy:** If the cauldron drops to 0 hit points, it makes the attack shown under Tip Over (below) but in a close burst 2 rather than a blast. | |
| ✦ **Lid:** Perception DC 23 (minor action). *Success:* The character spots the cauldron's lid beside it. A creature has to take a standard action to place or remove the lid. Placing the lid on the cauldron negates the zone until the lid is removed again. | |
| ✦ **Tip Over:** Athletics DC 32 (standard action). The character takes 15 fire and poison damage regardless of the check result. *Success:* The character dumps the cauldron's contents and makes the following attack. | |
| *Attack:* Close blast 5 (creatures in the blast); +21 vs. Fortitude | |
| *Hit:* Ongoing 10 fire and poison damage (save ends). | |
| *Miss:* Ongoing 5 fire and poison damage (save ends). | |
| *Effect:* The trap's effect ends. | |

## Development

If the giants in area 6 are drawn into this encounter, see below for their tactics.

# 6. Giant Quarters and Kennel

**Combat Encounter Level 19 (13,000 XP)**

These rooms serve as lodgings for adult fire giants, young fire giants, and hell hounds.

**Perception DC 23:** If the character is close to area 6A, he or she hears the drunken snoring of the adult fire giants. If the character is closer to area 6D, he or she hears growls and barks of the hell hounds instead.

**Light:** Bright light (torches in iron brackets).

**Monsters:** 3 fire giants, 8 young fire giants, 6 hunting hell hounds.

**When the characters see area 6A, read:**

*Enormous iron beds line the walls of this torchlit hall. Curtains made of linked iron plates hang in wide archways, blocking any view of what lies beyond. Scattered on the floor are several smashed kegs and empty tankards.*

**When the characters see area 6D, read:**

*Barred kennel sections make up this chamber, which smells of charred flesh. Blackened bones litter the obsidian-tiled floor.*

The ceiling is 40 feet high throughout. Large tapestries made of interlocking iron plates separate the various chambers. These curtains hang from large iron rods bolted to the ceiling and fall to within an inch of the floor. Each curtain is composed of hundreds of thin, rectangular iron plates held together by chain links and weighs hundreds of pounds. Moving past a tapestry requires a minor action, and creatures standing behind a tapestry gain superior cover.

**6A. Main Sleeping Hall:** Nine giant-sized beds made of iron line the walls. The floor is littered with empty tankards and shattered casks that once contained ale.

**6B. Adult Giants' Quarters:** Three giant-sized iron beds fill this chamber.

**6C. Young Giants' Quarters:** This room contains eight beds for the young fire giants that live here.

**6D. Kennel:** The giants keep their hell hounds here. The floor is littered with charred bones—the remains of the hounds' past meals.

**Tactics:** The fire giants encountered here recently returned from a raid and have been drinking. If they are alerted to intruders or aroused by Sulfuria (area 5), they summon the hell hounds and stagger into battle.

The young fire giants were caught misbehaving and have been confined to their quarters (area 6C) pending disciplinary action. If combat erupts, these 7-foot-tall giants pick up their swords and join the melee.

The hunting hell hounds are trained to obey the adult giants.

**Treasure:** These rooms have no monetary treasure, but characters searching the area find assorted mundane items (see "Treasure," page 3).

**3 Fire Giants** **Level 18 Soldier**
Large elemental humanoid (fire, giant) XP 2,000 each

**HP** 174; **Bloodied** 87 **Initiative** +11
**AC** 34, **Fortitude** 34, **Reflex** 28, **Will** 28 **Perception** +14
**Speed** 8
**Resist** 15 fire

Standard Actions

⊕ **Searing Greatsword** (fire, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 2 (one creature); +23 vs. AC
*Hit:* 2d12 + 13 fire damage.
*Effect:* The giant marks the target until the end of the giant's next turn.

⇙ **Sweeping Sword** (fire, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Close blast 2 (enemies in the blast); +23 vs. AC
*Hit:* 2d12 + 13 fire damage.
*Effect:* The giant marks the target until the end of the giant's next turn.

**Str** 23 (+15) **Dex** 11 (+9) **Wis** 10 (+9)
**Con** 22 (+15) **Int** 10 (+9) **Cha** 11 (+9)
**Alignment** evil **Languages** Giant
**Equipment** chainmail, greatsword

**8 Young Fire Giants** **Level 18 Minion Brute**
Medium elemental humanoid (fire, giant) XP 500 each

**HP** 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. **Initiative** +10
**AC** 30, **Fortitude** 30, **Reflex** 27, **Will** 26 **Perception** +9
**Speed** 6
**Resist** 15 fire

Standard Actions

⊕ **Bastard Sword** (fire, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 1 (one creature); +23 vs. AC
*Hit:* 16 fire damage.

Triggered Actions

**Confront** ✦ **At-Will**
*Trigger:* An enemy willingly leaves a square adjacent to the giant.
*Effect (Immediate Reaction):* The giant can shift 1 square, and it uses *bastard sword* against the triggering enemy.

**Str** 20 (+14) **Dex** 13 (+10) **Wis** 10 (+9)
**Con** 18 (+13) **Int** 10 (+9) **Cha** 11 (+9)
**Alignment** evil **Languages** Giant
**Equipment** bastard sword

**6 Hunting Hell Hounds** **Level 18 Minion Brute**
Medium elemental beast (fire) XP 500 each

**HP** 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. **Initiative** +13
**AC** 30, **Fortitude** 30, **Reflex** 28, **Will** 27 **Perception** +17
**Speed** 8
**Resist** 15 fire

Standard Actions

⊕ **Bite** (fire) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 1 (one creature); +23 vs. AC
*Hit:* 11 damage plus 5 fire damage.

⇙ **Fiery Breath** (fire) ✦ **Encounter**
*Attack:* Close blast 3 (creatures in the blast); +21 vs. Reflex
*Hit:* 18 fire damage.
*Miss:* 9 fire damage.

**Str** 20 (+14) **Dex** 18 (+13) **Wis** 16 (+12)
**Con** 23 (+15) **Int** 2 (+5) **Cha** 12 (+10)
**Alignment** evil **Languages** –

# 7. Council Chambers

**Combat Encounter Level 18 (11,600 XP) plus trap (1,600 XP)**

Snurre gathers his allies and advisors in this area to plan raids. The sleeping quarters and office of Obmi Ironwhisper, the king's chief advisor, are also located here. Fire giant raiders captured Obmi, a dwarf, and brought him as a slave to Snurre's Hall five years ago. Eventually, he wormed his way into Snurre's confidence by helping the king plan raids.

When he realized that Obmi hates his fellow dwarves as much as any giant does, Snurre appointed him his chief counsel. Obmi's knowledge of the dwarven clanholds has enabled Snurre to overcome their defenses with greater ease, and has given the dwarf tremendous influence among Snurre's warriors.

Obmi is resting in his quarters (area 7C) at the start of this encounter, but he wakes to the sound of combat in area 7B. The dwarf keeps a squad of azers nearby for protection. The azers also spy on Obmi for their master, the azer pyromancer Klarz (area 8). Obmi is aware of their divided loyalties but relies on them nonetheless.

**Light:** Bright light (torches and oil braziers).
**Monsters:** Obmi Ironwhisper, 6 azer blackguards.
**Trap:** Acid spray chest.

**When the characters see area 7A, read:**
*Four basalt braziers of flaming oil illuminate this vaulted chamber and fill the top third of the room with black smoke. A giant-sized hexagonal table of carved obsidian inlaid with brass dominates the room. Surrounding it are five giant-sized chairs and a sixth smaller chair with tall legs and a short stone ladder leading up to it. Chain curtains set with iron plates partially obscure a pair of large alcoves.*

**When the characters see area 7B, read:**
*Rich tapestries hang on the walls of this spacious chamber, flanked by a half-dozen dwarves clad in black chainmail. Their faces are hidden behind iron visors, and their flaming hair issues like plumes from holes in the tops of their black helms. As they see you, they fan out around the squat desk and chair that are the room's only furnishings, both sized for a dwarf. Lit candles and loose papers are strewn across the desk.*

**When the characters see area 7C, read:**
*This chamber contains a dwarf-sized bed covered with wool blankets, an iron chest with feet shaped like dragon's claws, and a squat wooden wardrobe.*

The ceiling in areas 7A and 7B is 40 feet high, dropping to a height of 20 feet in areas 7C and 7D.

**7A. Meeting Hall:** The smaller chair with stone steps is for Obmi Ironwhisper, who conducts strategy sessions with Snurre and other fire giants around the huge hexagonal table.

*Flaming Oil Braziers:* These heavy basalt braziers are 4 feet high and 5 feet wide. Tipping a brazier requires a standard action and a DC 23 Athletics check, and spills flaming oil in a close blast 5. The spilled oil creates a zone that lasts for 1 hour. Any creature that enters the zone or starts its turn there takes 5 fire damage and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends). A creature can take this damage only once per turn.

Two alcoves to the east and south are concealed behind curtains of chain and iron plate.

*East Alcove:* The east alcove has a painted bas-relief map on its back wall. Mountains and forests are shown as raised areas, with valleys and rivers between them. Settlements and outposts are marked with carved pieces of obsidian set into the map. The map is accurate and covers an area of approximately one hundred miles by one hundred miles. Various locations are marked on the map in Davek (the dwarven script), including the strongholds of the giant lords (the Hill Giant Steading, Howling Crag, the Glacial Rift, and King Snurre's Hall), as well as settlements that the giants have attacked or plan to attack.

*South Alcove:* The south alcove in area 7A contains three wooden cabinets, each 12 feet tall and 10 feet wide. Together, they hold a total of 83 scrolls and 367 pieces of parchment. Some of the scrolls contain written agreements between Snurre and the other giant lords (Nosnra, Arnak, and Grugnur), but most are blank. Any search of the cabinets also reveals a black vellum scroll with a message written in luminescent Rellanic script. (Snurre doesn't understand Elven, but Obmi was able to translate the letter for him.)

*Your Highness, King Snurre of the Fire Giants:*

*I request an audience with Your Majesty on a matter of great importance. A glorious opportunity awaits us. I have been granted permission by my superiors in the Fane of Lolth to offer you tribute for a few precious moments of your time. It has been years since representatives of our two peoples last spoke and shared a flagon of hot wine. On this particular occasion, Erelhei-Cinlu brings you a new promise of victory over your hated enemies.*

*If you will hear my words, please convey your interest with all haste. I look forward to hearing from you and visiting your great hall.*

*Eclavdra of House Eilservs*

Under threat of torture or death, Obmi reveals that Eclavdra is a drow priestess who sent this letter several months ago. She and her entourage arrived in Snurre's Hall from the drow city of Erelhei-Cinlu (pronounced *air*-eh-lie *sin*-loo) a few months ago. See "Development" below.

**7B. Obmi's Office:** Obmi drafts letters and other documents here. The room holds a desk, a chair, and a squad of azer blackguards.

The papers scattered on Obmi's desk contain orders from King Snurre (written in Davek, the Dwarven script) to various raiding parties in the field. The desk has a locked drawer containing blank parchment, empty scroll tubes, quills, and jars of ink, but nothing of value. Obmi has the key to the drawer, or it can be opened with a DC 23 Thievery check.

**7C. Obmi's Bedchamber:** This room contains a soft bed, a wooden wardrobe, and a trapped iron chest that holds Obmi's belongings and treasure.

The wardrobe is packed with dwarven clothing, including light apparel (tunics and shoes), heavier garments (cloaks, overcoats, gloves, and boots), and formal wear (rich vests, pants, shoes, and capes).

Opening the chest requires a DC 32 Thievery check or the key that Obmi conceals on his person (Perception DC 32 to find). The chest is trapped (see "Acid Spray Chest" below). It contains a solid jade

statuette of a castle (7,500 gp), a bejeweled beard comb (1,500 gp), a *potion of vitality*, a sack holding 500 gp, folded clothing, and worthless personal effects. Obmi disables the trap whenever he needs something out of the chest.

**7D. Supplies:** Crates of torches and casks of oil are stacked against the walls of this room. These supplies are blocking terrain.

**Tactics:** The azer blackguards charge into battle and use *blackguard's vengeance* at the earliest opportunity. They gang up on enemies to take advantage of their *warding balefire*.

Awakened by the noise of combat, Obmi watches the battle unfold through the crack in the doors to his room. After three azers fall in combat, Obmi snaps a pair of iron manacles on his wrists, then stumbles out of his bedchamber. He pretends to be a dwarf prince named Malak Thunderhelm, recently captured by King Snurre and forced under threat of torture to divulge information regarding nearby dwarven strongholds. Obmi has rigged the manacles so that they can be slipped off with a DC 15 Thievery check (a minor action).

The treacherous dwarf is unaware that the characters have been tasked with capturing him (see "Quests," page 2). The adventurers can try to bluff Obmi into thinking they believe him, but he can make an Insight check to glean their true intentions. When he realizes that his ruse has failed, Obmi uses *mad feint* to gain combat advantage before striking with his dagger. When bloodied, Obmi uses *phase walk* or his *ring of invisibility* to facilitate a hasty escape, fleeing to the king's throne hall (area 2). If he sees that Snurre is dead, Obmi uses the secret door to enter area 4, then descends to the second level and takes refuge with the rakshasas in area 10.

**Obmi Ironwhisper, Dwarf Advisor** — **Level 18 Skirmisher**
Medium natural humanoid — XP 2,000

**HP** 172; **Bloodied** 86 — **Initiative** +15
**AC** 32, **Fortitude** 30, **Reflex** 29, **Will** 31 — **Perception** +12
**Speed** 5 — Low-light vision

**Traits**

**Ring of Invisibility**
Obmi gains a +4 item bonus to Stealth checks (included in skills).

**Stand the Ground**
Obmi can move 1 square fewer than the effect specifies when subjected to a pull, a push, or a slide.

**Steady-Footed**
Obmi can make a saving throw to avoid falling prone when an attack would knock him prone.

**Standard Actions**

**Dagger** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 1 (one creature); +23 vs. AC
*Hit:* 4d4 + 16 damage, or 4d4 + 24 damage if the target is granting combat advantage to Obmi. If Obmi scores a critical hit, he deals 4d6 + 32 damage, or 4d6 + 40 damage if the target is granting combat advantage to him.

**Ring of Invisibility** (illusion) ✦ **Daily**
*Effect:* Obmi becomes invisible until the end of his next turn.

**Move Actions**

**Phase Walk** ✦ **Recharge** when an attack hits Obmi
*Effect:* Obmi moves up to his speed, and he is insubstantial and has phasing while doing so.

**Minor Actions**

**Mad Feint** ✦ **At-Will** (1/round)
*Requirement:* Obmi must be bloodied.
*Attack:* Melee 1 (one creature); +21 vs. Reflex
*Hit:* The target grants combat advantage to Obmi until the end of Obmi's current turn.
*Miss:* Obmi grants combat advantage to the target until the end of Obmi's next turn.

**Skills** Bluff +20, History +17, Insight +17, Stealth +22, Thievery +18
**Str** 17 (+12) **Dex** 19 (+13) **Wis** 17 (+12)
**Con** 20 (+14) **Int** 16 (+12) **Cha** 22 (+15)
**Alignment** evil **Languages** Common, Dwarven, Elven, Giant
**Equipment** *+4 dagger, ring of invisibility*

**6 Azer Blackguards** — **Level 17 Soldier**
Medium elemental humanoid (fire) — XP 1,600 each

**HP** 167; **Bloodied** 83 — **Initiative** +13
**AC** 33, **Fortitude** 31, **Reflex** 28, **Will** 29 — **Perception** +12
**Speed** 5
**Resist** 20 fire, 5 necrotic

**Traits**

**Warding Balefire** (fire, necrotic) ✦ **Aura** 1
An unmarked enemy that willingly leaves the aura provokes an opportunity attack from the azer. Any enemy that starts its turn in two or more *warding balefire* auras takes 5 fire and necrotic damage.

**Standard Actions**

**Battleaxe** (fire, necrotic, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 1 (one creature); +22 vs. AC
*Hit:* 2d10 + 9 damage, and ongoing 5 fire and necrotic damage (save ends).

**Vicious Cleave** (fire, necrotic, weapon) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞
*Attack:* Melee 1 (one creature); +22 vs. AC
*Hit:* 3d10 + 11 damage, and the target is slowed until the end of the azer's next turn. In addition, another enemy in the azer's aura takes 10 fire and necrotic damage.

**Triggered Actions**

**Blackguard's Vengeance** ✦ **Recharge** if the *battleaxe* attack for this power misses
*Trigger:* An adjacent enemy hits the bloodied azer with an attack.
*Effect (Free Action):* The azer uses *battleaxe* on the triggering enemy, and if the attack hits, the ongoing fire and necrotic damage is 15 instead of 5.

**Skills** Endurance +19, Intimidate +16
**Str** 21 (+13) **Dex** 17 (+11) **Wis** 18 (+12)
**Con** 23 (+14) **Int** 11 (+8) **Cha** 16 (+11)
**Alignment** evil **Languages** Dwarven, Giant
**Equipment** scale armor, light shield, battleaxe

## Acid Spray Chest

Obmi's iron treasure chest sprays acid unless the trap is disabled before the chest is opened.

| **Acid Spray Chest** | **Level 17 Trap** |
|---|---|
| Object | XP 1,600 |
| **Detect** Perception DC 31 | **Initiative** – |
| **HP** 75 | |
| **AC** 30, **Fortitude** 30, **Reflex** 5, **Will** – | |
| **Immune** cold, fire, necrotic, poison, psychic, radiant, forced movement, all conditions, ongoing damage | |
| **Triggered Actions** | |
| ✧ **Acid Spray** (acid) ✦ **Encounter** | |
| *Trigger:* A creature opens the chest without using the key or disabling the trap. | |
| *Attack (No Action):* Close burst 2 (creatures in the burst); +20 vs. Reflex | |
| *Hit:* 3d8 + 18 acid damage. | |
| *Miss:* Half damage. | |
| **Countermeasures** | |
| ✦ **Disable:** While adjacent to the chest, Thievery DC 31. *Three Consecutive Successes:* The trap is disabled. *Any One Failure (26 or lower):* The trap triggers. | |

## Development

The capture and return of Obmi Ironwhisper completes a minor quest (see "Quests," page 2).

If the adventurers capture Obmi, he realizes quickly that no amount of bargaining will win the day. Only the deaths of his captors can set him free. If the dwarf surmises that he's worth more to the characters alive than dead, he lies when it suits him, hoping that the adventurers get themselves killed. He sprinkles in the occasional truth to assuage characters who are angling to kill or torture him.

Obmi can be intimidated, forcing him to provide the characters with accurate descriptions of locations within Snurre's Hall, as well as information regarding its defenses. He never gives characters all the information they need—just enough to placate them. If he can place the adventurers in greater peril with a lie, he lies and waits for their luck to run out.

Use the following as guidelines for Obmi's answers to questions directed at him during interrogation.

**Who or what is behind the giant alliance?**
*"I was Snurre's advisor, but the alliance was the king's idea. I simply helped with the negotiations."*

Obmi is lying and makes no mention of the drow.

**How are the drow involved?**
*"A small group of drow is paying Snurre to study a temple that the fire giants unearthed years ago on the second level of the hall."*

Obmi is being partly truthful, but a successful Insight check (opposed by his Bluff check) reveals that he's withholding crucial facts. The drow pushed for the alliance and gave Snurre considerable sums of money to buy off the other giant lords.

**What do you know regarding the drow in King Snurre's Hall now?**
*"Their leader is named Eclavdra, but she is interested only in the temple. She paid Snurre a king's ransom for the chance to study it."*

Obmi is lying. He knows that Eclavdra is using the temple as an oracle, feeding information to Snurre to help him conquer his enemies (and, by extension, her enemies).

**How can you betray your own people by helping the giants?**
*"My people abandoned me long before I abandoned them."*

Obmi isn't lying, but he neglects to mention that he was exiled from his clanhold for crimes against his fellow dwarves.

**What is Erelhei-Cinlu?**
*"A drow city in the Underdark."*

Obmi fails to mention that the drow city can be reached by following a miles-long tunnel in Snurre's Hall (area 24).

**Where did the drow come from?**
*"A tunnel in the lowest depths of Snurre's Hall leads to the Underdark, and the territories claimed by the drow."*

Obmi tells the truth without giving away too many details.

# 8. Armory

**Combat Encounter Level 17 (8,800 XP)**

Weapons and armor created in the forge (area 12A) are stored here, hanging from tall iron racks bolted to the floor or dumped into iron trunks resting atop large blocks of stone. An azer pyromancer named Klarz is charged with tracking the armory's inventory—a job he detests. He aims to take over Obmi's job as advisor to the king. Much to Klarz's constant displeasure, Snurre has yet to acknowledge Klarz's intelligence and wisdom, instead relegating the crafty azer to banal tasks.

**Perception DC 17:** The character hears clattering metal and the occasional rant from Klarz in Primordial.

**Light:** Bright light (two oil braziers).

**Monsters:** Klarz (azer pyromancer), 2 fire archon sentinels, 4 hunting hell hounds.

**When the characters reach the armory, read:**
*Two basalt braziers filled with flaming oil illuminate what is clearly an armory. Armor and weapons hang from iron racks to left and right. Directly across from you stand four large blocks of black stone with iron trunks resting atop them.*

The ceiling in the armory is 40 feet high.

**Flaming Oil Braziers:** These heavy basalt braziers are 4 feet high and 5 feet wide. Tipping a brazier requires a DC 23 Athletics check (standard action), and spills flaming oil in a close blast 5. The spilled oil creates a zone that lasts for 1 hour. Any creature that enters the zone or starts its turn there takes 5 fire damage and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends). A creature can take this damage only once per turn.

**Basalt Blocks and Iron Trunks:** Each block of basalt is 6 feet high, 9 feet long, and 4 feet wide, and is blocking terrain. A large unlocked iron trunk rests atop each block. Two trunks contain twenty-five javelins each. Another holds twelve throwing axes, while the last holds one hundred fifty crossbow bolts. All these weapons are giant-sized.

**Armor and Weapon Racks:** Each wing of the armory contains a 12-foot-high iron rack bolted to the floor. The west rack holds fifteen greatswords, thirteen morningstars, eleven battleaxes, ten crossbows, six glaives, four bastard swords, three spiked chains, and two iron mauls. Hanging on the east rack are fourteen suits of chainmail, nine suits of scale armor, eight suits of plate armor, fifteen light steel shields, and twelve heavy steel shields. All the armor and weapons are giant-sized. A creature on one side of a rack has partial cover against those on the other side.

**Tactics:** Klarz uses *roaring flame* as often as possible, falling back on *curse of Imix* while waiting for *roaring flame* to recharge.

Fire archons keep on the move to use *skirmish*, using *cinder storm* zones to teleport into optimal positions.

The hunting hell hounds try to catch multiple enemies with their *fiery breath*.

**Azer Pyromancer** **Level 18 Artillery (Leader)**
Medium elemental humanoid (fire) XP 2,000

**HP** 139; **Bloodied** 69 **Initiative** +14
**AC** 32, **Fortitude** 31, **Reflex** 29, **Will** 30 **Perception** +13
**Speed** 5
**Resist** 20 fire

**Traits**

**Inimical Flames** (fire) ✦ **Aura** 1
Any enemy that starts its turn in the aura and adjacent to an ally of the azer takes 5 fire damage. Any enemy that ends its turn in the aura gains vulnerable 5 fire until the end of its next turn.

**Standard Actions**

**Warhammer** (fire, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 1 (one creature); +23 vs. AC
*Hit:* 3d10 + 4 damage, and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).

**Curse of Imix** (fire, psychic) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Ranged 20 (one creature); +23 vs. Fortitude
*Hit:* 2d8 + 6 psychic damage, and ongoing 10 fire damage and the target gains an aura 2 (save ends both). Any creature that ends its turn in the target's aura takes 10 fire damage.

**Roaring Flame** (fire, thunder) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞
*Attack:* Area burst 1 within 10 (creatures in the burst); +23 vs. Reflex
*Hit:* 1d8 + 15 fire and thunder damage, and ongoing 10 fire and thunder damage (save ends).

**Fuel the Fire** (fire) ✦ **Encounter**
*Effect:* Close burst 2 (enemies taking ongoing fire damage in the burst); the ongoing damage increases by 15. The azer can slide each fire ally in the burst up to 4 squares.

**Skills** Arcana +17, Insight +18
**Str** 18 (+13) **Dex** 20 (+14) **Wis** 18 (+13)
**Con** 25 (+16) **Int** 17 (+12) **Cha** 22 (+15)
**Alignment** evil **Languages** Dwarven, Giant, Primordial
**Equipment** chainmail, warhammer

**2 Fire Archon Sentinels** **Level 19 Skirmisher**
Medium elemental humanoid (fire) XP 2,400 each

**HP** 182; **Bloodied** 91 **Initiative** +18
**AC** 33, **Fortitude** 31, **Reflex** 32, **Will** 30 **Perception** +14
**Speed** 8
**Immune** disease, poison; **Resist** 20 fire

**Traits**

**Guttering Flame**
Whenever the archon takes cold damage, it cannot shift until the end of its next turn.

**Skirmish**
If the archon ends a move on its turn at least 4 squares from where it started the move, it deals 2d8 extra fire damage with melee attacks until the start of its next turn.

**Standard Actions**

**Fiery Scimitar** (fire, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 1 (one creature); +24 vs. AC
*Hit:* 3d8 + 14 fire damage.

**Cinder Storm** (fire, teleportation, zone) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞
*Effect:* Close blast 5. The blast creates a zone that lasts until the end of the archon's next turn, and the archon can teleport to any square in the blast. The zone is heavily obscured to all but fire creatures. Any enemy that ends its turn in the zone takes 15 fire damage.

**Str** 21 (+14) **Dex** 25 (+16) **Wis** 20 (+14)
**Con** 22 (+15) **Int** 14 (+11) **Cha** 15 (+11)
**Alignment** chaotic evil **Languages** Primordial

**4 Hunting Hell Hounds** **Level 18 Minion Brute**
Medium elemental beast (fire) XP 500 each

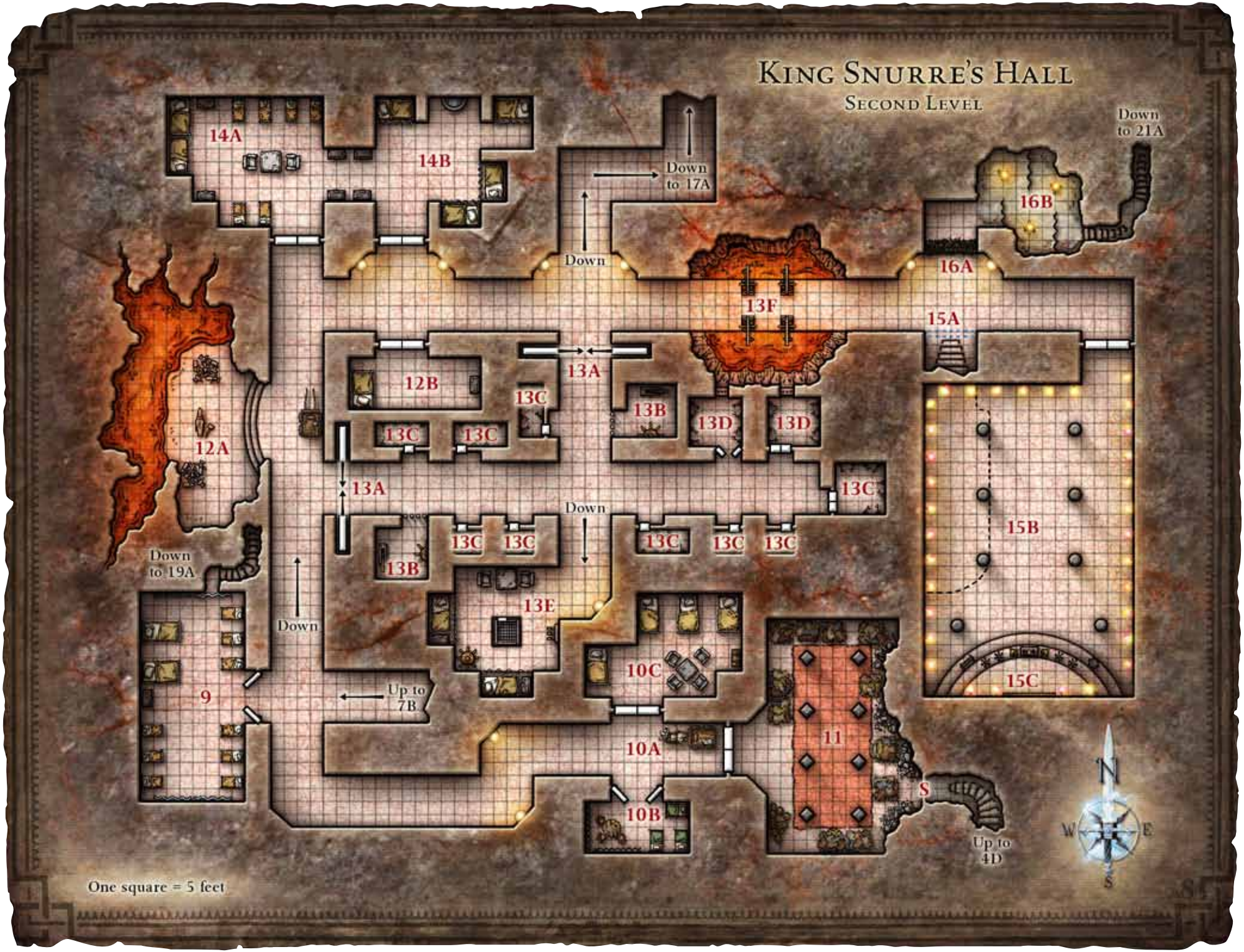
**HP** 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. **Initiative** +13
**AC** 30, **Fortitude** 30, **Reflex** 28, **Will** 27 **Perception** +17
**Speed** 8
**Resist** 15 fire

**Standard Actions**

**Bite** (fire) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 1 (one creature); +23 vs. AC
*Hit:* 11 damage plus 5 fire damage.

**Fiery Breath** (fire) ✦ **Encounter**
*Attack:* Close blast 3 (creatures in the blast); +21 vs. Reflex
*Hit:* 18 fire damage.
*Miss:* 9 fire damage.

**Str** 20 (+14) **Dex** 18 (+13) **Wis** 16 (+12)
**Con** 23 (+15) **Int** 2 (+5) **Cha** 12 (+10)
**Alignment** evil **Languages** –


King Snurre's Hall
Second Level
14A
14B
Down to 17A
Down
Down to 21A
16B
16A
13F
15A
12B
13A
13C
13B
13D
13D
12A
13C
13C
13A
13C
Down
15B
13C
13C
13C
13C
13C
13B
Down to 19A
13E
Down
10C
Up to 7B
9
11
15C
10A
S
10B
Up to 4D
N
W
E
S
One square = 5 feet

## Second Level (Areas 9–16)

As with the first level, this level is carved from red-black basalt. The walls are smooth and require a DC 25 Athletics check to climb. The dominant features here are the prison (area 13) and the Temple of the Elder Elemental Eye (area 15).

**Ceilings:** Passageways have vaulted ceilings 30 feet high, while rooms have ceilings 40 to 50 feet high.

**Doors:** All doors on this level are made of welded iron plates. Normal-sized double doors are 15 feet tall and half a foot thick; giant-sized double doors are 25 feet tall and 1 foot thick. A Medium or Small character can open a normal door as a standard action, or a minor action with a DC 24 Athletics check. A Medium or Small character can open a giant-sized door as a standard action with a DC 33 Athletics check.

**Illumination:** All areas are brightly lit unless otherwise noted. In some locations, basalt braziers are built into the walls about 1 foot off the floor. These 5-foot-wide, 3-foot-deep stone basins contain burning oil and shed bright light out to 10 squares. In other locations, torches are mounted in iron brackets 10 feet above the floor.

**Oversized Furnishings:** Many furnishings are sized for 12-foot-tall fire giants. They measure slightly more than twice the dimensions of their human-sized counterparts and are eight times the weight.

## 9. Barracks

**Combat Encounter Level 18 (10,400 XP)**

The iron doors to this chamber are wedged open, affording the room's occupants a clear view of the hallway and ramp outside.

**Perception:** Any Perception check enables a character to hear the giggling of the nothic.

**Light:** Bright light (torches).

**Monsters:** 2 two-headed fire giants, nothic mindblight.

**When the characters can see area 9, read:**

*The great iron doors to this room hang open, beyond which you see a torchlit chamber with tapestries adorning the walls. The room holds two giant-sized wrought-iron beds, several smaller beds, and an iron chest standing to the west.*

*Waiting in the middle of the room are a pair of two-headed fire giants, smoldering morningstars clutched in each of their hands. A gangly creature with warty green skin cavorts behind them, its face set with a single unblinking eye.*

**When the monsters see the party, read:**

*The one-eyed creature cackles maniacally at the sight of you, but the two-headed giants don't look amused.*

The ceiling here is 40 feet high. The giant-sized iron beds and iron chest belong to Harrigus and Skaltath—the unfortunate results of fire giant–ettin crossbreeding. The smaller iron beds belong to the azers in area 13. Hidden behind one of the tapestries, a narrow staircase descends 75 feet to area 19A.

Harrigus and Skaltath are usually kept out of sight due to their hideous appearance, but King Snurre has charged them with keeping their eyes on his guests in areas 10 and 11.

**Treasure:** The unlocked iron chest next to the giants' bed contains a sack of 2,000 gp and assorted mundane items (see "Treasure," page 3).

**Tactics:** The giants lay into enemies with double *morningstar* attacks, smashing their foes to pulp.

The nothic relies on the giants to keep the adventurers at bay while it employs its area and ranged attacks. It uses *necrotic eye* while those other powers are recharging, but knows better than to catch a giant in the area of the blast.

| **2 Two-Headed Fire Giants** | **Level 18 Elite Brute** |
|---|---|
| Large elemental humanoid (fire, giant) | XP 4,000 each |
| **HP** 424; **Bloodied** 212 | **Initiative** +12 |
| **AC** 30, **Fortitude** 31, **Reflex** 29, **Will** 28 | **Perception** +11 |
| **Speed** 7 | |
| **Resist** 15 fire | |
| **Saving Throws** +2; **Action Points** 1 | |
| **Traits** | |
| **Double Actions** | |
| The giant makes two initiative checks and takes a full turn on each initiative result. The giant can take two immediate actions per round but only one between one turn and the next. | |
| **Dual Brain** | |
| At the end of each of its turns, the giant ends any dazing, stunning, or charm effect on itself. | |
| **Standard Actions** | |
| ⊕ **Morningstar** (fire, weapon) ✦ **At-Will** | |
| *Attack:* Melee 2 (one creature); +23 vs. AC | |
| *Hit:* 2d12 + 19 fire damage. | |
| ⸸ **Crushing Flame** (fire, weapon) ✦ **At-Will** | |
| *Attack:* Melee 2 (one creature); +23 vs. AC | |
| *Hit:* 2d12 + 19 fire damage, and the target falls prone. If the target is already prone, it takes 2d12 extra fire damage. | |
| **Str** 25 (+16) **Dex** 16 (+12) **Wis** 14 (+11) | |
| **Con** 22 (+15) **Int** 9 (+8) **Cha** 9 (+8) | |
| **Alignment** evil **Languages** Dwarven, Giant | |
| **Equipment** scale armor, 2 morningstars | |

| Nothic Mindblight | Level 19 Controller |
|---|---|
| Medium aberrant humanoid | XP 2,400 |
| **HP** 180; **Bloodied** 90 | **Initiative** +14 |
| **AC** 32, **Fortitude** 32, **Reflex** 32, **Will** 29 | **Perception** +11 |
| **Speed** 6 | Darkvision, truesight 10 |
| **Standard Actions** | |
| ⊕ **Claw** (necrotic) ✦ **At-Will** | |
| *Attack:* Melee 1 (one creature); +24 vs. AC | |
| *Hit:* 2d10 + 6 damage, and ongoing 10 necrotic damage (save ends). | |
| ✧ **Necrotic Eye** (necrotic) ✦ **At-Will** | |
| *Attack:* Close blast 5 (creatures in the blast); +22 vs. Fortitude | |
| *Hit:* Ongoing 15 necrotic damage (save ends). | |
| ✧ **Eye of Insanity** (charm, psychic) ✦ **Recharge** when no creature is dominated by the nothic | |
| *Attack:* Ranged 5 (one creature); +22 vs. Will | |
| *Hit:* The target is dominated (save ends). | |
| *Aftereffect:* The target is dazed until the end of its next turn. | |
| ✧ **Mesmerizing Visage** (charm, psychic) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞ | |
| *Attack:* Area burst 2 within 10 (enemies in the burst); +22 vs. Will | |
| *Hit:* 2d8 + 11 psychic damage, and the target takes a -1 penalty to saving throws. | |
| *First Failed Saving Throw:* The target instead takes a -3 penalty to saving throws. | |
| **Skills** Stealth +19 | |
| **Str** 21 (+14) **Dex** 20 (+14) **Wis** 15 (+11) | |
| **Con** 20 (+14) **Int** 10 (+9) **Cha** 12 (+10) | |
| **Alignment** unaligned **Languages** Deep Speech | |

## Development

If combat erupts here, the rakshasas in area 10B overhear the commotion, urging the frost giants in area 10C to investigate. See area 10 for more information.

# 10. Guest Quarters

**Combat Encounter Level 18 (11,400 XP)**

King Snurre is currently entertaining a number of guests, including representatives of the other giant lords. Quartered in this area are four frost giant ambassadors representing Grugnur, the frost giant jarl, as well as four rakshasas interested in helping Snurre and learning more of his arrangement with the drow.

If the creatures in this area hear sounds of combat in area 9 or 11, they cannot be surprised.

**Light:** Bright light (torches).

**Monsters:** Kavir (rakshasa mage), 3 rakshasa archers, 4 frost giants.

**Other Creatures:** 1 mountain yak.

**When the characters first see the mountain yak in area 10A, read:**

*In front of the closed iron doors at the end of this hall, a shaggy white mountain yak stands tethered to an empty two-wheeled wooden cart. Iron doors set into the south wall are open, while doors to the north and east stand closed.*

**When the characters see area 10B, read:**

*Through the open doors, you see a comfortable room equipped for creatures of human size. The furnishings have an elven cast to them, and include three soft beds, a round table, three ornately carved chairs, and two tapestries depicting tranquil forest scenes. Standing around the room are three elves in tattered clothing, their faces bearing the bruises and scars of a harrowing ordeal.*

**When the characters see area 10C, read:**

*The iron doors open to reveal a surprisingly cold, torchlit chamber containing four wrought-iron beds, a table surrounded by four chairs, and a large iron chest. A wooden cask and several tankards are strewn across the table. All the furnishings and accessories are sized for giants.*

Snurre's raids have attracted the attention of Kavir, a rakshasa mage. Although the fire giant king is reluctant to enter into any sort of agreement with Kavir and his kin, his advisors are understandably concerned about keeping the rakshasas happy.

The frost giant ambassadors are representatives of Jarl Grugnur, and they have not yet learned that Grugnur is dead (assuming his was slain in "Glacial Rift of the Frost Giant Jarl").

The ceiling is 30 feet high in area 10B and 40 feet high elsewhere.

**10A. Yak-Drawn Cart:** The yak and the sturdy cart belong to the hill giants in area 11, and are used to haul the giants' belongings. Currently empty, the cart can hold four Medium creatures or one Large creature. Characters who want to travel in the cart can use the reins to direct the yak, which pulls the cart at a speed of 6 (half speed up the ramps). Any attack directed at the yak hits and kills it.

**10B. Rakshasas:** The doors to this chamber are wedged open, allowing the room's rakshasa occupants to keep an eye on the hallway outside. The room contains furnishings stolen from elven settlements, and the rakshasas use their *deceptive veil* power to conceal their true forms, appearing as elves.

**10C. Frost Giants' Quarters:** The iron doors of this chamber are freezing to the touch. This room is kept cold by a carpet of brown mold growing on the ceiling. A DC 20 Dungeoneering check recognizes this rare dungeon hazard and its cooling effect. Any creature that comes into contact with the brown mold takes 10 cold damage. A creature can take this damage only once per turn.

Four frost giant ambassadors reside here, resting atop wrought-iron beds heaped with furs. A large unlocked wooden chest contains a sack of 500 gp, an ivory and malachite horn (1,500 gp), and mundane items (see "Treasure," page 3).

**Tactics:** If the rakshasas hear the sound of combat in area 9 or area 11, they alert the frost giants and

convince them to investigate. After dispatching the frost giants, the rakshasas disguise themselves as elves and wait in area 10B. Kavir assumes the form of a female elf princess and refers to himself as Moonshadow. The rakshasa archers pretend to be the princess's male elf bodyguards. They claim that the giants allowed them to keep their bows as a form of mockery.

Kavir, as Moonshadow, spins the following tale.

*"We were traversing the foothills of the Crystalmist Mountains when frost giants attacked our retinue. Only we few survived. Our captors brought us before King Snurre as tribute. I was able to convince him that we were worth more alive, and that my people would pay well for our safe return. Against the counsel of his advisors, the king placed us here and said that if we attempted escape, he would show us no mercy."*

If Kavir has reason to believe that the characters have already encountered and freed the real Princess Moonshadow (area 13), he tries to convince them that they were duped and that he is the real princess.

If the characters ask "Moonshadow" why she doesn't take advantage of her situation and attempt escape, she says:

*"We would never make it out the front doors alive. I don't want to make our situation worse by attempting escape. Of course, things are different now that you're here."*

If the characters fall for the ruse, the rakshasas ask to accompany them. Although they pretend to know little about the layout of Snurre's Hall, "Moonshadow" mentions that several other captives are confined in the nearby prison (area 13), and she would like to try to free them as well. If the characters agree, the rakshasas turn against them as soon as they are swept up in combat with the guards in that area.

If the characters have already dealt with the prison guards, "Moonshadow" announces that she has seen drow in Snurre's Hall and believes they're hiding somewhere on this level. The elves offer to help the characters root out their hated kin. Again, the rakshasas bide their time, perhaps waiting until the characters confront the drow in the Temple of the Elder Elemental Eye (area 15) before attacking.

**4 Frost Giants** **Level 17 Brute**
Large elemental humanoid (cold, giant) XP 1,600 each

**HP** 201; **Bloodied** 100 **Initiative** +11
**AC** 29, **Fortitude** 32, **Reflex** 27, **Will** 28 **Perception** +13
**Speed** 8 (ice walk)
**Resist** 15 cold

Traits

**Icebound Footing**
When an effect pulls, pushes, or slides the giant, it can choose to move 2 squares fewer than the effect specifies. The giant can make a saving throw to avoid falling prone when an attack would knock it prone.

Standard Actions

⊕ **Icy Greataxe** (cold, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 2 (one creature); +22 vs. AC
*Hit:* 3d12 + 11 cold damage, or 2d12 + 47 cold damage if the giant scores a critical hit.

⸸ **Chilling Strike** (cold, weapon) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞
*Attack:* Melee 2 (one creature); +22 vs. AC
*Hit:* 5d12 + 15 cold damage, and the target gains vulnerable 10 cold (save ends).

**Skills** Athletics +19
**Str** 23 (+14) **Dex** 16 (+11) **Wis** 20 (+13)
**Con** 21 (+13) **Int** 10 (+8) **Cha** 12 (+9)
**Alignment** evil **Languages** Giant
**Equipment** hide armor, greataxe

**Rakshasa Mage** **Level 16 Controller**
Medium natural humanoid XP 1,400

**HP** 153; **Bloodied** 76 **Initiative** +10
**AC** 30, **Fortitude** 26, **Reflex** 29, **Will** 28 **Perception** +11
**Speed** 6 Low-light vision

Standard Actions

⊕ **Claw** (teleportation) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 1 (one creature); +21 vs. AC
*Hit:* 3d6 + 10 damage, and the rakshasa teleports the target up to 3 squares.
*Miss:* The rakshasa can teleport the target 1 square.

✲ **Misleading Visions** (illusion, psychic) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Area burst 1 within 5 (enemies in the burst); +19 vs. Will
*Hit:* 2d10 + 11 psychic damage, and the rakshasa slides the target up to 4 squares.
*Miss:* The rakshasa can slide the target 1 square.

✲ **Visions of Terror** (fear, illusion, psychic) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞
*Attack:* Area burst 1 within 5 (enemies in the burst); +19 vs. Will
*Hit:* 3d10 + 13 psychic damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).
*Miss:* Half damage, and the target is slowed until the end of the rakshasa's next turn.

Minor Actions

**Deceptive Veil** (illusion) ✦ **At-Will**
*Effect:* The rakshasa disguises itself to appear as a Medium humanoid until it uses *deceptive veil* again or until it drops to 0 hit points. Other creatures can make a DC 36 Insight check to discern that the form is an illusion.

**Persistent Image** (illusion) ✦ **At-Will**
*Effect:* The rakshasa creates an illusion of a Medium or smaller object or creature in an unoccupied square within 10 squares of it. The illusion can be animate, but it does not produce noise. The illusion lasts until the end of the rakshasa's next turn. A creature that succeeds on a DC 22 Insight check can see through the illusion.
*Sustain Minor:* The illusion persists until the end of the rakshasa's next turn, and the rakshasa can move the illusion up to 6 squares.

**Str** 12 (+9) **Dex** 14 (+10) **Wis** 16 (+11)
**Con** 17 (+11) **Int** 24 (+15) **Cha** 21 (+13)
**Alignment** evil **Languages** Common

| 3 Rakshasa Archers | Level 15 Artillery |
|---|---|
| Medium natural humanoid | XP 1,200 each |
| **HP** 110; **Bloodied** 55 | **Initiative** +12 |
| **AC** 28, **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 26, **Will** 25 | **Perception** +16 |
| **Speed** 6 | Low-light vision |
| **Standard Actions** | |
| **Claw** ✦ **At-Will** | |
| *Attack:* Melee 1 (one creature); +20 vs. AC | |
| *Hit:* 2d6 + 6 damage, and ongoing 5 damage (save ends). | |
| **Longbow** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will** | |
| *Attack:* Ranged 20 (one creature); +22 vs. AC. The rakshasa makes two attack rolls and uses either result. | |
| *Hit:* 1d10 + 9 damage. | |
| **Double Attack** ✦ **At-Will** | |
| *Effect:* The rakshasa uses *longbow* twice, making each attack against a different target. | |
| **Ghost Arrow** (necrotic, weapon) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞ | |
| *Attack:* Ranged 20 (one creature); +20 vs. Reflex | |
| *Hit:* 3d10 + 18 necrotic damage, and the target cannot spend healing surges (save ends). | |
| **Minor Actions** | |
| **Deceptive Veil** (illusion) ✦ **At-Will** | |
| *Effect:* The rakshasa disguises itself to appear as a Medium humanoid until it uses *deceptive veil* again or until it drops to 0 hit points. Other creatures can make a DC 35 Insight check to discern that the form is an illusion. | |
| **Triggered Actions** | |
| **Illusory Escape** (illusion) ✦ **Recharge** when first bloodied | |
| *Trigger:* An enemy makes a ranged attack against the rakshasa. | |
| *Effect (Immediate Reaction):* The rakshasa becomes invisible, and an illusion of it appears in its square. The transition is indiscernible to observers, and the illusion lasts until the start of the rakshasa's next turn or until a creature attacks the illusion. After the illusion appears, the rakshasa shifts up to its speed. | |
| **Str** 17 (+10) **Dex** 20 (+12) **Wis** 18 (+11) | |
| **Con** 14 (+9) **Int** 12 (+8) **Cha** 14 (+9) | |
| **Alignment** evil **Languages** Common | |
| **Equipment** longbow, 20 arrows | |

# 11. Blood Rock Hall

**Combat Encounter Level 18 (11,400 XP)**

Formerly a temple dedicated to the primordial known as Imix (the evil "Prince of Elemental Fire"), this hall now serves as quarters for visiting hill giant and stone giant dignitaries, including the hill giant subchief. Basalt pillars support the ceiling, and the floor between them is composed of magic blood rock. Some time ago, an earthquake caused part of the east wall to collapse.

**Perception DC 23:** The character hears the snoring giants.

**Light:** Bright light (torches).

**Monsters:** Sly Gulla, 4 hill giants, 4 stone giants, 2 earth archon rumblers.

**When the characters first peer into this hall, read:**

*Black basalt pillars rise to support the vaulted ceiling of this 50-foot-high chamber, which has seen better days. Three walls feature bright murals of fiery creatures. The east wall has partially collapsed, leaving chunks of broken basalt and painted plaster spread across the floor. Around the pillars, the floor is stained with crimson blood.*

*Two groups of hill giants and stone giants rest atop heaps of furs piled against the walls, while two burly humanoids made of jagged rock stand guard in the middle of the room.*

The earth archons notice and attack intruders at once. Opening the large iron doors to the west or the secret door in the east wall is enough to attract the archons' attention. The hill giants and stone giants are asleep when the characters first arrive, but they awake as soon as combat begins.

Sly Gulla, the hill giant subchief, has not yet learned that his chief, Nosnra, is dead (assuming he was slain in "Steading of the Hill Giant Chief"). Snurre and his advisors have kept this information to themselves, afraid of what it might do to the hill giants' morale.

**Blood Rock:** The floor inside the orange area on the map is made of blood rock. A creature standing in a square of blood rock can score a critical hit on a roll of 19–20.

**Crates and Barrels:** In the southwest corner of the room stands a heap of crates and barrels containing stolen foodstuffs and ale (brought here on the cart in area 10A). These squares are difficult terrain.

**Rubble:** This debris is difficult terrain.

**Secret Door:** A hidden stone door in the shattered east wall requires a DC 24 Perception check to spot. Pushing it open reveals a rough-hewn tunnel with giant-sized steps, climbing 75 feet to area 4D. The stairs are difficult terrain for creatures ascending them, but are normal terrain while descending.

**Treasure:** The giants carry a total of 350 gp, as well as sacks and bags of assorted mundane items (see "Treasure," page 3).

**Tactics:** Sly Gulla and his band are spoiling for a fight. The hill giant subchief moves into the blood rock, firing his crossbow while his allies charge into battle and smash enemies with their *greatclub* attacks. When an ally drops to 0 hit points, Sly Gulla issues a *call for vengeance*.

The stone giants stand on the blood rock and hurl rocks, stepping into melee only after the hill giants and archons are taken down. They rely on their *stone bones* power to reduce damage from incoming attacks.

Each earth archon rumbler moves adjacent to multiple enemies, letting it benefit from *thundering might*. It smashes foes with its *stone warhammer*, using *avalanche strike* only when there's no danger of hitting its allies.

The giants and archons pursue enemies who flee this area. The stone giants are aware of the secret door, and have been warned not to traverse the tunnel beyond it. The hill giants are not aware of the door and received no such warning, so they chase the adventurers if they flee through it. Sly Gulla is a hunter first and foremost, and he relishes the idea of stalking prey through the halls of the fire giant king.

**Sly Gulla, Hill Giant Subchief** — **Level 14 Skirmisher (Leader)**
Large natural humanoid (giant) — XP 1,000

**HP** 140; **Bloodied** 70 — **Initiative** +11
**AC** 28, **Fortitude** 27, **Reflex** 24, **Will** 24 — **Perception** +12
**Speed** 8

**Traits**

**Sly Maneuvers**
Sly Gulla shifts up to 2 squares before making any attack.

**Standard Actions**

⊕ **Spear** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 2 (one creature); +19 vs. AC
*Hit:* 2d10 + 11 damage.

↗ **Crossbow** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Ranged 15 (one creature); +19 vs. AC
*Hit:* 2d10 + 11 damage.

**Triggered Actions**

↯ **Call for Vengeance** ✦ **At-Will**
*Trigger:* An ally Sly Gulla can see drops to 0 hit points.
*Effect (Immediate Reaction):* Close burst 10 (one ally in the burst); the target makes a basic attack as a free action.

**Skills** Athletics +17, Stealth +14
**Str** 21 (+12) **Dex** 14 (+9) **Wis** 11 (+7)
**Con** 20 (+12) **Int** 11 (+7) **Cha** 15 (+9)
**Alignment** chaotic evil **Languages** Common, Giant
**Equipment** hide armor, spear, crossbow, 10 bolts

**4 Hill Giants** — **Level 13 Brute**
Large natural humanoid (earth, giant) — XP 800 each

**HP** 159; **Bloodied** 79 — **Initiative** +5
**AC** 25, **Fortitude** 27, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 25 — **Perception** +7
**Speed** 8

**Standard Actions**

⊕ **Greatclub** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 2 (one creature); +18 vs. AC
*Hit:* 3d10 + 11 damage.

↗ **Hurl Rock** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Ranged 10 (one creature); +18 vs. AC
*Hit:* 2d10 + 8 damage.

**Sweeping Club** (weapon) ✦ **Encounter**
*Attack:* Melee 2 (one or two creatures); +18 vs. AC
*Hit:* 3d10 + 11 damage, and the giant pushes the target up to 2 squares and knocks it prone.

**Skills** Athletics +16
**Str** 21 (+11) **Dex** 8 (+5) **Wis** 12 (+7)
**Con** 19 (+10) **Int** 7 (+4) **Cha** 9 (+5)
**Alignment** chaotic evil **Languages** Giant
**Equipment** greatclub, 5 rocks

**2 Earth Archon Rumblers** — **Level 17 Brute**
Medium elemental humanoid (earth) — XP 1,600 each

**HP** 204; **Bloodied** 102 — **Initiative** +12
**AC** 29, **Fortitude** 31, **Reflex** 28, **Will** 29 — **Perception** +13
**Speed** 6 (earth walk) — Tremorsense 20
**Immune** disease, petrification, poison

**Traits**

**Thundering Might** (thunder)
If the archon is adjacent to two or more enemies, its attacks deal 2d8 extra thunder damage.

**Standard Actions**

⊕ **Stone Warhammer** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 2 (one creature); +22 vs. AC
*Hit:* 3d10 + 15 damage.

↯ **Avalanche Strike** ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Close burst 2 (creatures in the burst); +20 vs. Reflex
*Hit:* 1d10 + 12 damage, and the target falls prone.

**Str** 24 (+15) **Dex** 18 (+12) **Wis** 21 (+13)
**Con** 24 (+15) **Int** 15 (+10) **Cha** 17 (+11)
**Alignment** chaotic evil **Languages** Primordial
**Equipment** warhammer

**4 Stone Giants** — **Level 14 Soldier**
Large elemental humanoid (earth, giant) — XP 1,000 each

**HP** 140; **Bloodied** 70 — **Initiative** +12
**AC** 30, **Fortitude** 27, **Reflex** 24, **Will** 26 — **Perception** +12
**Speed** 8 (earth walk) — Low-light vision
**Immune** petrification

**Standard Actions**

⊕ **Stone Greatclub** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 2 (one creature); +21 vs. AC
*Hit:* 2d10 + 11 damage, and the giant marks the target until the end of the giant's next turn.

↗ **Hurl Rock** ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Ranged 20 (one creature); +21 vs. AC
*Hit:* 2d8 + 13 damage.

↯ **Staggering Sweep** (weapon) ✦ **Recharge** when first bloodied
*Attack:* Close blast 2 (creatures in the blast); +19 vs. AC
*Hit:* 2d10 + 11 damage, the giant pushes the target up to 2 squares, and the giant marks the target until the end of the giant's next turn.
*Effect:* The giant shifts 2 squares but must remain within 2 squares of any creatures marked by it.

**Triggered Actions**

**Hardened Threat** ✦ **At-Will**
*Trigger:* A creature marked by the giant and within its reach willingly moves.
*Effect (Opportunity Action):* The giant *uses stone greatclub* against the triggering creature.

**Stone Bones** ✦ **At-Will**
*Trigger:* The giant is hit by an attack.
*Effect (Immediate Interrupt):* The giant gains resist 5 to all damage against the triggering attack.

**Skills** Athletics +18, Stealth +15
**Str** 22 (+13) **Dex** 16 (+10) **Wis** 20 (+12)
**Con** 20 (+12) **Int** 10 (+7) **Cha** 11 (+7)
**Alignment** unaligned **Languages** Giant
**Equipment** greatclub, 3 rocks

## 12. Zarkad's Forge

**Combat Encounter Level 18 (10,000 XP)**

These areas are the domain of Zarkad, a blind fire giant blacksmith who wears an eyeless helm that amplifies his natural blindsight. Zarkad forges armor and weapons, then transports them in an iron cart to the armory (area 8). Characters approaching area 12A detect the telltale signs of a forge—waves of heat, billowing clouds of smoke, and the sound of hammered iron.

**Light:** Bright light in area 12A (lava), none in area 12B (being blind, Zarkad keeps his quarters dark).

**Monsters:** Zarkad, 1 slaughterstone eviscerator, 2 azer fireweavers.

**When the characters see area 12A, read:**
*Smoke issues from a thirty-foot-wide opening in the wall of the tunnel, across from which stands a large iron cart laden with steel weapons. Three steps in the opening lead down to a cavern half filled with molten lava. At a great black anvil in the center of the cavern, a fire giant lays down a twisted piece of metal and pounds it flat with a flaming hammer. The bare-chested giant wears a horned helm with an opaque black visor. Flanking him are pyramidal, 5-foot-high stacks of smaller anvils. Two fire-haired dwarves attend the blind giant. As well, a large construct fitted with scythe-like blades stands in an alcove.*

Zarkad relies on a pair of azer fireweavers to help him craft his armor and weapons. When confronted by intruders, the fire giant also activates a slaughterstone eviscerator. Originally built by dwarves, this construct was captured during a raid on a dwarven clanhold and brought to Zarkad in pieces. Over time, Zarkad repaired the construct and set it to heed his commands.

**When the characters see area 12B, read:**
*This unlit room contains a giant-sized bed made of sculpted iron and a large iron chest that has been bolted to the floor.*

**12A. The Forge:** Lava fills the west half of this natural cavern, seeping up through narrow fissures in the north wall, then pouring back down into area 19B on the third level. Any creature that enters the pool or starts its turn there takes 15 fire damage and ongoing 15 fire damage (save ends). A creature can take this damage only once per turn.

Zarkad uses the lava to heat metal, which he then beats into shape at his massive anvil. The two stacks of anvils provide raw steel and make an effective weapon for Zarkad to hurl at intruders. The 5-foot stacks are difficult terrain.

Parked across the hall from the forge is the four-wheeled iron cart that Zarkad uses to transport armor and weapons to the armory (area 8). The iron cart currently contains three battleaxes and ten javelins, all sized for fire giants. The heavy cart requires a DC 17 Athletics check to move. A creature pushing the cart moves at half speed.

**12B. Zarkad's Quarters:** This room contains no decor, since Zarkad has no need of it. A giant-sized wrought-iron bed is pushed into one corner, while a locked iron chest is bolted to the floor near the east wall. Zarkad carries the key to the chest, which otherwise requires a DC 32 Thievery check to open. The chest contains a +5 *greatsword* (or another level 21 common magic item), a golden statuette set with rubies depicting the Fire Lord Imix (15,000 gp), and 4,000 gp in a small unlocked iron coffer.

**Tactics:** With a command, Zarkad animates the slaughterstone eviscerator, then moves into position to hurl anvils at distant enemies. He has two anvils at hand, but must move to within 2 squares of a stack of anvils to throw more. When foes move close, he pounds them into smoldering mush, using *blind fury* with his *fiery hammer*.

The azer fireweavers each place an *ember wall* between Zarkad and his enemies, since the fire giant's blindsight allows him to attack through the wall without penalty. They then use *hurl flame* and *fire puppet* each round, hoping to slide enemies into the lava pool.

The giant and the azers keep out of the slaughterstone eviscerator's way, avoiding its *whirling blades* aura and its *whirling bladestorm* burst attack.

**Zarkad, Fire Giant Blacksmith** — **Level 18 Elite Brute**
Large elemental humanoid (blind, fire, giant) — XP 4,000

**HP** 424; **Bloodied** 212 — **Initiative** +13
**AC** 30, **Fortitude** 32, **Reflex** 29, **Will** 28 — **Perception** +16
**Speed** 7 — Blindsight 10
**Immune** blinded, gaze; **Resist** 15 fire
**Saving Throws** +2; **Action Points** 1

**Standard Actions**

⊕ **Fiery Hammer** (fire, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 2 (one creature); +23 vs. AC
*Hit:* 3d10 + 16 fire damage.

**Hurl Anvil** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Ranged 10 (one creature); +21 vs. Reflex
*Hit:* 3d12 + 11 damage, and the target falls prone.

**Blind Fury** ✦ **At-Will**
*Effect:* Zarkad makes two basic attacks.

**Triggered Actions**

**Iron Kick** ✦ **At-Will**
*Trigger:* An enemy enters a square adjacent to Zarkad.
*Attack (Immediate Reaction):* Melee 1 (the triggering enemy); +21 vs. Fortitude
*Hit:* 2d8 + 7 damage, and Zarkad pushes the target up to 2 squares.

**Skills** Intimidate +15
**Str** 25 (+16) **Dex** 18 (+13) **Wis** 15 (+11)
**Con** 22 (+15) **Int** 14 (+11) **Cha** 12 (+10)
**Alignment** evil **Languages** Giant, Primordial
**Equipment** warhammer, horned helm, 2 anvils

**Slaughterstone Eviscerator** — **Level 18 Brute**
Large natural animate (construct) — XP 2,000

**HP** 212; **Bloodied** 106 — **Initiative** +15
**AC** 30, **Fortitude** 31, **Reflex** 30, **Will** 28 — **Perception** +9
**Speed** 6 — Darkvision
**Immune** disease, poison, sleep

**Traits**

**Whirling Blades** ✦ **Aura** 2
Any creature that starts its turn in the aura takes 10 damage.

**Tunnel Fighting**
While squeezing, the eviscerator takes no penalty to attack rolls and does not grant combat advantage.

**Standard Actions**

⊕ **Eviscerating Blade** ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 2 (one creature); +23 vs. AC.
*Hit:* 2d10 + 16 damage, or 4d10 + 36 damage if the eviscerator scores a critical hit.

**Whirling Bladestorm** ✦ **Recharge** ⚅
*Attack:* Close burst 2 (creatures in the burst); +23 vs. AC
*Hit:* 2d10 + 8 damage, or 2d10 + 28 damage if the eviscerator scores a critical hit.

**Str** 25 (+16) **Dex** 22 (+15) **Wis** 10 (+9)
**Con** 22 (+15) **Int** 1 (+4) **Cha** 3 (+5)
**Alignment** unaligned **Languages** –

**2 Azer Fireweavers** — **Level 18 Controller**
Medium elemental humanoid (fire) — XP 2,000 each

**HP** 177; **Bloodied** 88 — **Initiative** +12
**AC** 32, **Fortitude** 31, **Reflex** 28, **Will** 29 — **Perception** +15
**Speed** 5
**Resist** 20 fire

**Traits**

**Amplified Flames** (fire) ✦ **Aura** 1
Any enemy that starts its turn in the aura takes 5 fire damage. If the enemy starts its turn in two or more *amplified flames* auras, the enemy takes 10 fire damage instead.

**Standard Actions**

⊕ **Warhammer** (fire, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 1 (one creature); +23 vs. AC
*Hit:* 2d10 + 5 damage, and ongoing 10 fire damage (save ends).

**Hurl Flame** (fire) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Ranged 10 (one creature); +21 vs. Reflex
*Hit:* 2d8 + 7 fire damage, and ongoing 10 fire damage (save ends).

**Ember Wall** (conjuration, fire) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⚅
*Effect:* Area wall 6 within 10. The azer conjures a wall of hot embers and thick smoke that lasts until the end of the azer's next turn. The wall can be up to 6 squares high. The wall is heavily obscured and blocks line of sight. Any creature that ends its turn in the wall takes 20 fire damage.

**Minor Actions**

**Fire Puppet** ✦ **At-Will** (1/round)
*Attack:* Ranged 10 (one creature taking ongoing fire damage); +21 vs. Will
*Hit:* The azer slides the target up to 3 squares.

**Str** 18 (+13) **Dex** 17 (+12) **Wis** 22 (+15)
**Con** 25 (+16) **Int** 12 (+10) **Cha** 12 (+10)
**Alignment** evil **Languages** Dwarven, Giant
**Equipment** chainmail, warhammer

## 13. Prison

**Combat Encounter Level 19 (12,000 XP)**

The prison consists of two intersecting corridors lined with iron cell doors. The cells contain various prisoners captured during giant raids. Prisoners do not dwell here for long; most are taken elsewhere and used as slaves or food. Some prisoners are worth more alive, and King Snurre is fond of making ransom demands that might fatten his coffers or buy the loyalty of his allies.

Such is the case with Moonshadow, an elf princess imprisoned here. Virchiln, Eclavdra's drow consort, is currently interrogating Moonshadow for information regarding her homeland. After the drow are finished interrogating her, Snurre plans to ransom her back to her people.

The first part of this event describes the prison and the creatures that defend it. The second part details the various prisoners contained within.

**Light:** Bright light in areas 13A, 13B, and 13E (torches), dim light in the 13D cells (light through the windows), and none in the 13C cells.

**Monsters:** The King's Torturer (fire giant torturer), the Royal Headsman (fire giant executioner), 12 azer hallwardens, Virchiln (drow hypnotist).

**Other Creatures:** The prisoners (see below).

**When the characters see area 13A, read:**

*Two sliding iron doors are recessed into the walls of the corridor, flush with the surrounding stonework. No mechanism can be seen for closing them. Fire-haired dwarves stand guard in the torchlit corridor beyond.*

**When the characters see area 13E, read:**

*At the bottom of a ramp stands a grimy, smelly chamber with two large curtained alcoves. A giant-sized stone table and two stone chairs stand against the north wall. In the middle of the room is a ten-foot-wide pit, above which an iron cage dangles from chains attached to the ceiling. An iron winch in the southwest corner raises and lowers the cage. Bolted to the east wall at a height of eight feet is a cast-iron plate with three iron levers jutting from it.*

The cells have 20-foot-high ceilings. Everywhere else, the ceilings are 30 feet high.

The prison can be sealed off by two sets of iron doors that slide out from the walls. The azers, who take their orders from a pair of fire giants known as the King's Torturer and the Royal Headsman, use these doors to trap prisoners (and their would-be liberators) until they can be subdued or killed.

**13A. Sliding Iron Doors:** Standing 25 feet tall and 5 feet thick, these iron doors retract into the walls when not being used to seal off the cell block. Hidden rollers and steam-powered hydraulics work the doors, whose control levers are located in both areas marked 13B.

When the doors close, any creature that occupies a square between them is pushed adjacent to the doors on one side or the other (the creature's choice). A creature that is unable to leave the space between the sliding doors takes 25 damage and is restrained, then takes ongoing 25 damage until the doors open. A successful DC 32 Athletics check allows a creature to force the doors open as wide as a restrained creature's space. The doors can also be attacked (AC/Fortitude 32, Reflex 5; immune to cold, necrotic, poison, psychic, radiant, forced movement, all conditions, ongoing damage; hp 1,000 per door.)

**13B. Control Rooms:** Each of these two rooms contains a pair of azers who operate the prison's defenses. Set into the floor is an iron plate with a heavy iron lever jutting out of it. This lever controls the sliding iron doors nearest to the control room. When the lever is pulled to close the iron doors, a portcullis seals off each of these rooms to prevent prisoners from accessing the control levers. A large winch in the room can be used to raise a portcullis, which can also be lifted with a successful DC 32 Athletics check. Operating the winch or the lever requires a standard action.

**13C. Dark Cells:** Prisoners are locked behind iron doors with window shutters built into them. The cells are devoid of fixtures except for iron manacles bolted to the walls. The guards usually don't take the time to shackle prisoners, since only the most irksome captives are worth the trouble. A creature can free itself or another creature from the shackles with the proper key (in the possession of the King's Torturer) or a DC 23 Thievery check.

Each cell door is 15 feet high and 1 foot thick, and is set with two small window slits—one at 12 feet (eye level for the fire giants), the other at 4 feet (eye level for the azers). These slits are fitted with iron shutters that can be opened and closed only from the outside. (The shutters are kept closed, ensuring that prisoners cannot see through to the outside corridor.)

The cell doors are locked, and the King's Torturer carries the keys. A lock cannot be reached from inside its cell, but it can be picked from outside with a DC 32 Thievery check.

**13D. Windowed Cells:** These two cells are similar to the others, except that they feature barred windows overlooking a lava-filled cavern spanned by a basalt bridge. The lava is 75 feet below and can't be seen through the bars because of the steep angle. The bridge (area 13F) is clearly visible. The bars on the windows are 6 inches apart; bending or breaking them requires a DC 32 Athletics check.

**13E. Torture Chamber:** Two fire giants, the King's Torturer and the Royal Headsman, reside here. When not playing knucklebones, they spend most of their waking hours torturing prisoners, sometimes for information but usually just for pleasure. The two fire giants sleep in wrought iron beds hidden behind curtained alcoves. These same alcoves contain a pair of locked iron trunks, where the fire giants keep their loot and belongings.

The centerpiece of the chamber is a torture pit, above which hangs an iron cage. Prisoners are locked inside the cage, lowered into the pit, and exposed to blasts of acid, fire, and poison.

*Torture Device:* An iron cage, 9 feet across and 12 feet high, hangs suspended from a thick iron chain that runs from the ceiling to an iron winch set into the floor. The cage is locked (the King's Torturer has the key; Thievery DC 32 to open) and hangs at floor level above a 10-foot-wide, 20-foot-deep pit with small holes drilled into its walls.

One or more creatures are locked inside the cage and lowered into the pit using the winch (a standard action). One of the three levers on the eastern wall is pulled (a standard action), exposing the cage's occupant to the deadly substances that issue forth from the holes in the walls of the pit.

Lever 1 sprays the pit with jets of flame. Any creature in the pit when the lever is pulled takes 5 fire damage.

Lever 2 fills the pit with sulfurous gas. Any creature in the pit when the lever is pulled takes 5 poison damage.

Lever 3 sprays the pit with flesh-eating acid. Any creature in the pit when the lever is pulled takes 5 acid damage.

*Treasure:* On the 6-foot-high table are the wagers of a recent game of knucklebones between the two giants: six pieces of jewelry (1,000 gp each) and twenty gems (500 gp each). The King's Torturer and the Royal Headsman keep the rest of their treasure locked in the iron chests next to their bed. They carry the keys, and each lock can be picked with a DC 23 Thievery check.

The chest belonging to the King's Torturer contains ten golden dragon statuettes depicting different kinds of chromatic and metallic dragons (each worth 500 gp), a dozen elven longswords, and a *potion of vitality*. The Royal Headsman's chest contains a model of a golden galleon in a crystal bottle (2,500 gp) and another *potion of vitality*. In addition to these valuables, the fire giants stash assorted mundane items in their chests (see "Treasure," page 3).

**13F. Basalt Bridge:** This black basalt bridge spans a natural cavern, the ceiling of which is 30 feet above. The bridge has no railing, and any creature falling off plunges 70 feet into molten lava in area 20A, taking 7d10 falling damage. In addition, any creature that enters the lava or starts its turn there takes 15 fire damage and ongoing 15 fire damage (save ends). A creature can take this damage only once per turn.

*Iron Cages:* Four winches are mounted on the bridge. Each is affixed to a sturdy iron chain connected to an iron cage that dangles 20 feet below the bridge. Three cages are presently empty, but one contains a prisoner (see area 20). Using the winches to raise the cages alerts the fire giant flameskulls and fire bat swarms in area 20A, which rise up and attack interlopers on the bridge.

**Tactics:** If the characters are reluctant to enter the cell block, choosing to attack the azer guards from a distance, the remaining azers take cover in the alcoves in front of the cell doors. The azers' preference is to lure characters into the cell block, then trap them inside. They're not afraid to come after enemies who refuse to be baited.

The two fire giants are playing knucklebones in area 13E when the alarm sounds. They then grab their weapons and go to the cell block. When they arrive, the giants go on the offensive.

If the adventurers enter the prison, the azers in area 13B close the sliding iron doors to seal off the cell block, which drops the portcullises that seal off both guardrooms. They reopen the iron doors only after the fire giants order them to do so, and only after enemies trapped inside the cell block have been dealt with.

The remaining azers gang up on the nearest enemies, taking advantage of their *warding flame*. If the cell block hasn't been locked down (most likely because the azers in area 13B were taken out), the azers in the corridor try to fight their way into the nearest control room and activate the door levers.

Virchiln has come to the prison to retrieve an elf prisoner for sacrifice at the temple (see area 15). Beforehand, he takes time to interrogate and brutalize Moonshadow in her cell, where he is found when the alarm sounds. He attempts to use Stealth to sneak away from the cell, make his way to area 15 (using *cloud of darkness* to cover his escape), and report to Eclavdra. If he is trapped in the cell block, he tries to dominate enemies with *hypnotic suggestion*, using them to attack their allies or to aid in his escape. Virchiln has no loyalty to the fire giants or azers, helping them only in ways that benefit him.

## Development

Characters who are captured anywhere in Snurre's Hall are incarcerated in the unoccupied area 13D cell. See "Captured!" (page 4) for details.

Zarkad (area 12) is close enough to the prison to hear the sound of combat in this area. If fighting breaks out and the cell block hasn't been locked down, he throws anvils into the iron cart and wheels it toward the prison, doing what he can to assist the defenders. The azers and the construct in area 12 follow Zarkad into battle.

If the characters capture Virchiln and question him regarding the whereabouts of Eclavdra, he reveals that the priestess is in the lower caverns making plans to return to the drow city of Erelhei-Cinlu. (This is a lie. Eclavdra is presently in area 15, but Virchiln hopes to escape and warn her.) If the characters talk to the prisoners and hear about the treacherous adventurer Gleep Wurp (see below), Virchiln knows that he is in area 23.

**Fire Giant Torturer** **Level 19 Soldier**
Large elemental humanoid (fire, giant) XP 2,400

**HP** 185; **Bloodied** 92 **Initiative** +11
**AC** 35, **Fortitude** 34, **Reflex** 29, **Will** 30 **Perception** +16
**Speed** 7
**Resist** 15 fire

**Traits**

☼ **Fiery Agony** ✦ **Aura** 3
A slowed enemy in the aura cannot regain hit points or gain temporary hit points until it hits or misses the giant with an attack.

**Standard Actions**

⊕ **Greatsword** (fire, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 2 (one creature); +24 vs. AC
*Hit:* 3d12 + 8 fire damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).

↭ **Sword Arc** ✦ **Recharge** when the giant bloodies an enemy
*Effect:* Close burst 2 (enemies in the burst); the giant uses *greatsword* against each target. If the attack hits, the target also falls prone.

**Skills** Intimidate +14
**Str** 24 (+16) **Dex** 11 (+9) **Wis** 14 (+11)
**Con** 25 (+16) **Int** 13 (+10) **Cha** 10 (+9)
**Alignment** evil **Languages** Common, Giant
**Equipment** scale armor, greatsword

**Fire Giant Executioner** **Level 20 Brute**
Large elemental humanoid (fire, giant) XP 2,800

**HP** 236; **Bloodied** 118 **Initiative** +11
**AC** 32, **Fortitude** 35, **Reflex** 30, **Will** 31 **Perception** +10
**Speed** 7
**Resist** 15 fire

**Standard Actions**

⊕ **Greataxe** (fire, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 2 (one creature); +25 vs. AC
*Hit:* 3d12 + 16 fire damage, or 6d12 + 16 fire damage if the giant scores a critical hit, plus 10 fire damage to a prone target.

**Executioner's Chop** ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞
*Effect:* The executioner uses *greataxe*. If the attack hits, the target also takes ongoing 15 damage (save ends). The attack deals half damage on a miss.

**Triggered Actions**

**Heads Must Roll** ✦ **Encounter**
*Trigger:* The giant is first bloodied.
*Effect (Immediate Reaction): Executioner's chop* recharges, and the giant uses it.

**Skills** Intimidate +17
**Str** 24 (+17) **Dex** 13 (+11) **Wis** 10 (+10)
**Con** 26 (+18) **Int** 10 (+10) **Cha** 14 (+12)
**Alignment** evil **Languages** Common, Giant
**Equipment** chainmail, chainmail hood, greataxe

**12 Azer Hallwardens** **Level 17 Minion Soldier**
Medium elemental humanoid (fire) XP 400 each

**HP** 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. **Initiative** +13
**AC** 33, **Fortitude** 31, **Reflex** 28, **Will** 29 **Perception** +12
**Speed** 5
**Resist** 20 fire

**Traits**

**Warding Flame** (fire)
Any enemy that starts its turn adjacent to two or more azers that have this trait takes 5 fire damage.

**Standard Actions**

⊕ **Warhammer** (fire, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 1 (one creature); +22 vs. AC
*Hit:* 8 damage plus 5 fire damage.

**Str** 21 (+13) **Dex** 17 (+11) **Wis** 18 (+12)
**Con** 23 (+14) **Int** 11 (+8) **Cha** 16 (+11)
**Alignment** unaligned **Languages** Dwarven, Giant
**Equipment** chainmail, light shield, warhammer

**Drow Hypnotist** **Level 18 Controller**
Medium fey humanoid XP 2,000

**HP** 170; **Bloodied** 85 **Initiative** +15
**AC** 32, **Fortitude** 28, **Reflex** 30, **Will** 31 **Perception** +12
**Speed** 7 Darkvision

**Standard Actions**

⊕ **Dagger Lure** (charm, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 1 (one creature); +23 vs. AC
*Hit:* 4d4 + 15 damage.
*Effect:* The drow slides the target up to 2 squares.

➢ **Hand Crossbow** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Ranged 10 (one creature); +23 vs. AC
*Hit:* 3d6 + 15 damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).
*First Failed Saving Throw:* The target is also weakened (save ends both).
*Second Failed Saving Throw:* The target instead falls unconscious until the end of the encounter.

➢ **Hypnotic Suggestion** (charm) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞
*Attack:* Ranged 5 (one creature); +21 vs. Will
*Hit:* The target is dominated until the end of the drow's next turn.
*Miss:* The target is dazed until the end of the drow's next turn.

**Minor Actions**

↭ **Cloud of Darkness** (zone) ✦ **Encounter**
*Effect:* Close burst 1. The burst creates a zone that lasts until the end of the drow's next turn. The zone blocks line of sight for all creatures except the drow. While entirely within the zone, any creature other than the drow is blinded.

**Skills** Bluff +21, Insight +17, Intimidate +21, Stealth +20
**Str** 14 (+11) **Dex** 22 (+15) **Wis** 17 (+12)
**Con** 18 (+13) **Int** 14 (+11) **Cha** 24 (+16)
**Alignment** evil **Languages** Common, Elven
**Equipment** leather armor, dagger, hand crossbow, 20 bolts

## The Prisoners

The adventurers can try to free prisoners in the thick of combat, or they can wait until after they've secured the cell block. Some of the prisoners do their best to help the characters; others hinder them.

**Prisoners:** Boldo, fire giant; Dram Blighthammer, dwarf; Fonkin Hoddypeak, elf adventurer; Moonshadow, elf princess; eight elf prisoners.

### Boldo

Boldo the fire giant wears manacles on his wrists and is shackled to the back wall of his cell. He has been locked up here for failing to show proper deference to Snurre. Boldo was the king's chief lieutenant, and he will do anything to get back into Snurre's good graces. He lies to the adventurers, telling them that he was imprisoned after trying to prevent Snurre from taking his current hostile course of action. He promises that if he's set free, he can convince several other fire giants to help overthrow the king and secure Snurre's Hall. If the characters free him, he betrays them at the earliest opportunity.

In combat, Boldo looks for any chance to get his hands on a giant-sized greatsword. Until then, he is happy to strangle enemies with his manacles (either the ones on his wrists or a loose set). If the characters have not obtained the torturer's keys, Boldo's manacles can be opened with a DC 32 Thievery check.

**Boldo, Fire Giant Prisoner** **Level 18 Elite Brute**
Large elemental humanoid (fire, giant) XP 4,000

**HP** 424; **Bloodied** 212 **Initiative** +9
**AC** 30, **Fortitude** 32, **Reflex** 29, **Will** 30 **Perception** +10
**Speed** 7
**Resist** 15 fire
**Saving Throws** +2; **Action Points** 1

**Standard Actions**

⊕ **Slam** (fire) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 2 (one creature); +23 vs. AC
*Hit:* 4d6 + 15 fire damage, and the target falls prone.

⊕ **Greatsword** (fire, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Requirement:* Boldo must be wielding a greatsword and must not have a creature grabbed.
*Attack:* Melee 2 (one creature); +23 vs. AC
*Hit:* 4d12 + 6 fire damage.

**Double Attack** ✦ **At-Will**
*Requirement:* Boldo must not have a creature grabbed.
*Effect:* Boldo uses *slam* and *manacles*, uses *slam* twice, or uses *greatsword* twice.

**Manacles** (fire, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 2 (one creature); +21 vs. Reflex
*Hit:* 4d8 + 15 fire damage, and the target is grabbed (escape DC 23).

**Minor Actions**

**Strangle** (weapon) ✦ **Recharge** when Boldo starts his turn with a creature grabbed
*Effect:* Melee 2 (one creature grabbed by Boldo); 4d8 + 15 damage.

**Triggered Actions**

**Fire's Fury** (fire) ✦ **Encounter**
*Trigger:* Boldo is first bloodied.
*Attack (Immediate Reaction):* Close burst 2 (creatures in the burst); +21 vs. Reflex
*Hit:* 2d8 + 15 fire damage.
*Miss:* Half damage.

**Skills** Bluff +17, Endurance +20, Intimidate +17

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Str** 23 (+15) | **Dex** 11 (+9) | **Wis** 12 (+10) |
| **Con** 22 (+15) | **Int** 15 (+11) | **Cha** 16 (+12) |

**Alignment** evil **Languages** Common, Dwarven, Giant
**Equipment** manacles

### RUNNING THE PRISONERS

Dram, Fonkin, and Moonshadow all have an interest in joining the adventurers on their mission to rout King Snurre. If adding these characters to the party is too much trouble, you can choose to have them attempt to escape from Snurre's Hall instead. (Dram and Fonkin can be easily convinced to escort Moonshadow safely back to her homeland.) If you do decide to add prisoners to the party, use them to create drama and tension where appropriate.

Adding secondary characters offers both advantages and disadvantages. On the plus side, new characters can take some of the heat off the adventurers by drawing attacks and absorbing damage, as well as providing additional attacks and flanking opportunities. Downsides include new characters becoming a drain on the party's healing resources, their potentially troubling quirks (including Fonkin's cowardice), and the fact that characters such as Dram and Moonshadow are worth more to the adventurers alive than dead.

## Dram Blighthammer

Dram is the youngest son of a powerful dwarf merchant named Zalko Blighthammer. A captain in the dwarven military, Dram became separated from his unit during a raid against a fire giant outpost. He was captured and brought here two weeks ago. The giants and the azers torment him constantly, and he holds little hope of being rescued.

If Dram is freed, he picks up a warhammer from the nearest dead azer and helps the adventurers any way he can. His hatred of fire giants and azers is boundless, and he attacks them with little regard for his own well-being. If the characters have Obmi Ironwhisper in their custody (see area 7), Dram recognizes the treacherous dwarf and vows to kill him for collaborating with the giants. Unless the characters convince Dram to stand down (either through roleplaying or with a DC 23 Diplomacy check), he attacks Obmi.

If Dram survives the adventure and makes it out of Snurre's Hall alive, he returns home. After hearing the tale of his son's escape, Zalko Blighthammer tracks down the adventurers and gives them a reward: five astral diamonds (50,000 gp total).

**Dram Blighthammer** **Level 15 Defender**
Medium natural humanoid, dwarf

**HP** 118; **Bloodied** 59; **Healing Surges** 13 — **Initiative** +7
**AC** 32, **Fortitude** 30, **Reflex** 27, **Will** 27 — **Perception** +8
**Speed** 5 — Low-light vision

**Traits**

**Stand the Ground**
Dram can move 1 square fewer than the effect specifies when subjected to a pull, a push, or a slide.

**Steady-Footed**
Dram can make a saving throw to avoid falling prone when an attack would knock him prone.

**Standard Actions**

**Warhammer** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 1 (one creature); +21 vs. AC
*Hit:* 1d10 + 11 damage, and the target is slowed until the end of Dram's next turn.
*Effect:* The target is marked until the end of Dram's next turn.

**Minor Actions**

**Dram's Resilience** (healing) ✦ **Encounter**
*Effect:* Dram can spend a healing surge.

**Triggered Actions**

**Power Strike** ✦ **3/Encounter** (1/round)
*Trigger:* Dram hits with *warhammer.*
*Effect (No Action):* The target takes 1d10 extra damage.

**Skills** Athletics +16, Dungeoneering +15, Endurance +18, Insight +13

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Str** 18 (+11) | **Dex** 10 (+7) | **Wis** 12 (+8) |
| **Con** 19 (+11) | **Int** 15 (+9) | **Cha** 15 (+9) |

**Alignment** lawful good **Languages** Common, Dwarven, Giant
**Equipment** chainmail, light shield, warhammer

## Fonkin Hoddypeak

Fonkin was a member of an adventuring party that was all but wiped out by the giants. He recounts the following tale to his rescuers.

*"Two of my comrades, Flerd Trantle and Beek Gwenders, perished in the glacial rift of the frost giants. The rest of us—Gleep Wurp, Cloyer Bulse, and myself—were captured and brought here. Only then did we learn the truth—Gleep, our leader, was working for the giants all along!*

*Apparently, we weren't the first group of adventurers he had led astray to be captured or killed. Cloyer and I were imprisoned. A couple of days later, Gleep paid me one last visit to let me know that Snurre was promoting him, and that he had reduced my magic items to residuum. I haven't seen the treacherous bastard since."*

If the characters inquire into Cloyer's fate, Fonkin says that the giants tortured, killed, and ate him. If the characters ask about Gleep Wurp's "promotion," Fonkin replies:

*"Gleep said that Snurre needed a new emissary—someone smart to work closely with the dark elves. He was making plans to travel to a drow city in the Underdark."*

Knowing that he was next on the giants' dinner menu, Fonkin is quick to join the characters. In combat, he uses *spellbound shift* against a close-packed group of foes, then follows up with *radiant blade.* Fonkin's recent ordeal has shattered his confidence in a way that does not become clear until he's in the thick of combat. Whenever he is first bloodied, Fonkin drops what he is holding and flees the area by the most expeditious route. His confidence does not return until he escapes from Snurre's Hall or until he deals the killing blow to a fire giant or drow.

Given his druthers, Fonkin would rather appear heroic than *be* heroic. If the characters suggest that he escort Princess Moonshadow to safety, he eagerly accepts. He can take up arms from a slain azer, but he prefers to use one of the elven longswords found in the torturer's chest.

| **Fonkin Hoddypeak** | **Level 18 Striker** |
|---|---|
| Medium fey humanoid, elf | |
| **HP** 112; **Bloodied** 66; **Healing Surges** 8 | **Initiative** +9 |
| **AC** 33, **Fortitude** 31, **Reflex** 31, **Will** 31 | **Perception** +15 |
| **Speed** 8 | Low-light vision |
| **Traits** | |
| **Combat Advantage** | |
| Once per round, when Fonkin hits an enemy granting combat advantage to him, he deals that enemy 2d6 extra damage. | |
| **Wild Step** | |
| Fonkin ignores difficult terrain when he shifts. | |
| **Standard Actions** | |
| ⊕ **Longsword** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will** | |
| *Attack:* Melee 1 (one creature); +25 vs. AC | |
| *Hit:* 1d8 + 13 damage. | |
| ☽ **Magic Missile** (force) ✦ **At-Will** | |
| *Effect:* Ranged 20 (one creature); 15 force damage. | |
| ✧ **Radiant Blade** (radiant, weapon) ✦ **Encounter** | |
| *Attack:* Close burst 1 (enemies in the burst); +25 vs. AC | |
| *Hit:* 1d8 + 13 radiant damage, and the target is blinded (save ends). | |
| **Move Actions** | |
| **Spellbound Shift** ✦ **Encounter** | |
| *Effect:* Fonkin shifts up to half his speed and can shift through enemy spaces. Every enemy whose space he shifts into is dazed until the end of Fonkin's turn. | |
| **Triggered Actions** | |
| **Elven Accuracy** ✦ **Encounter** | |
| *Trigger:* Fonkin makes an attack roll. | |
| *Effect (Free Action):* Fonkin rerolls the triggering attack roll and uses the second result. | |
| **Skills** Arcana +17, Athletics +18, Endurance +16, Nature +15 | |
| **Str** 18 (+13) **Dex** 11 (+9) **Wis** 18 (+13) | |
| **Con** 15 (+11) **Int** 16 (+12) **Cha** 12 (+10) | |
| **Alignment** lawful good **Languages** Common, Elven | |
| **Equipment** chainmail, longsword | |

## Princess Moonshadow

Moonshadow is shackled to the wall and has a sack over her head that limits her ability to attack her jailers. She has been badly beaten by her drow interrogator and has 62 hit points remaining.

Given how she likes to be in charge, her present situation has greatly ruffled Moonshadow's delicate disposition. As soon as she is freed, the princess tries to take command, doing her best to point out the adventurers' shortcomings and set them on a path to success. She also attempts to order the characters to wipe out the drow in Snurre's Hall as their primary goal. Her hatred of the dark elves has no bounds, and she blames them for the horrors that Snurre and his allies have unleashed.

Moonshadow knows that the leader of the drow in Snurre's Hall is named Eclavdra, and that she is an influential member of the House of Eilservs (a drow house based in the subterranean city of Erelhei-Cinlu). She also knows that the drow sent to interrogate her is (or was) Eclavdra's latest consort. Moonshadow knows that Virchiln has been collecting the other members of her retinue to be ritually sacrificed in a nearby temple. With each sacrifice, Eclavdra learns secrets that she imparts to the giants, helping them with their plans of conquest.

Convincing Moonshadow to flee Snurre's Hall takes some effort, requiring either good roleplaying or a successful DC 30 Diplomacy or Intimidate check. If the characters assign Dram or Fonkin to "protect" her, Moonshadow lets her exasperation show but accepts their aid. She refuses to leave Snurre's Hall unless the characters assure her that they intend to destroy Eclavdra and stop her from using the temple.

| **Moonshadow, Elf Princess** | **Level 15 Controller** |
|---|---|
| Medium fey humanoid | |
| **HP** 98; **Bloodied** 49; **Healing Surges** 10 | **Initiative** +9 |
| **AC** 30, **Fortitude** 27, **Reflex** 27, **Will** 30 | **Perception** +11 |
| **Speed** 7 | Low-light vision |
| **Traits** | |
| **Wild Step** | |
| Moonshadow ignores difficult terrain when she shifts. | |
| **Standard Actions** | |
| ⊕ **Moonshadow Touch** (charm) ✦ **At-Will** | |
| *Attack:* Melee 1 (one creature); +19 vs. Reflex | |
| *Hit:* 1d8 + 11 damage, Moonshadow can slide the target 1 square, and the target cannot make opportunity attacks until the end of Moonshadow's next turn. | |
| ☽ **Silver Ray** (radiant) ✦ **At-Will** | |
| *Attack:* Ranged 20 (one creature); +19 vs. Reflex | |
| *Hit:* 1d10 + 11 radiant damage, and Moonshadow is invisible to the target until the end of her next turn. In addition, the target is considered to have been hit by a silvered weapon. | |
| ✧ **Glorious Presence** (charm, radiant) ✦ **Encounter** | |
| *Attack:* Close burst 2 (enemies in the burst); +19 vs. Will | |
| *Hit:* 3d6 + 11 radiant damage, and Moonshadow pushes the target up to 2 squares. | |
| *Effect:* Moonshadow and each ally in the burst gains 9 temporary hit points. | |
| **Triggered Actions** | |
| **Elven Accuracy** ✦ **Encounter** | |
| *Trigger:* Moonshadow makes an attack roll. | |
| *Effect (Free Action):* Moonshadow rerolls the triggering attack roll and uses the second result. | |
| **Lingering Magic** ✦ **Encounter** | |
| *Trigger:* An effect Moonshadow imposed on an enemy would end on her current turn. | |
| *Effect (Free Action):* The triggering effect instead ends at the end of Moonshadow's next turn. | |
| **Skills** Arcana +15, Bluff +16, Diplomacy +16, Insight +14, Nature +11 | |
| **Str** 12 (+8) **Dex** 14 (+9) **Wis** 15 (+9) | |
| **Con** 17 (+10) **Int** 16 (+10) **Cha** 18 (+11) | |
| **Alignment** good **Languages** Common, Dwarven, Elven | |
| **Equipment** robes | |

## Elf Prisoners

These eight elves are all that's left of Moonshadow's escort of twenty-four warriors, and they have sworn to protect their princess. They can take up arms and armor from the slain creatures here, but they prefer to retrieve the elven longswords from the torturer's chest. The other elves in Moonshadow's company were killed in the initial attack or handed over to the drow, where they have been sacrificed on the altar in area 15.

| **8 Elf Prisoners** | **Level 15 Minion Soldier** |
|---|---|
| Medium fey humanoid | |
| **HP** 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. | **Initiative** +11 |
| **AC** 31, **Fortitude** 28, **Reflex** 26, **Will** 27 | **Perception** +15 |
| **Speed** 7 | Low-light vision |
| **Traits** | |
| **Wild Step** | |
| The elf ignores difficult terrain when it shifts. | |
| **Standard Actions** | |
| ⊕ **Longsword** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will** | |
| *Attack:* Melee 1 (one creature); +20 vs. AC | |
| *Hit:* 11 damage. | |
| *Effect:* The elf marks the target until the end of the elf's next turn. | |
| **Triggered Actions** | |
| **Elven Accuracy** ✦ **Encounter** | |
| *Trigger:* The elf makes an attack roll. | |
| *Effect (Free Action):* The elf rerolls the triggering attack roll and uses the second result. | |
| **Skills** Athletics +14, Nature +12 | |
| **Str** 15 (+9) **Dex** 15 (+9) **Wis** 16 (+10) | |
| **Con** 18 (+11) **Int** 11 (+7) **Cha** 13 (+8) | |
| **Alignment** good **Languages** Common, Elven | |
| **Equipment** chainmail, longsword | |

## Development

Helping Moonshadow escape from Snurre's Hall completes a minor quest (see "Quests," page 3). If Dram makes it out alive, the characters receive a monetary reward for rescuing him (see above).

# 14. Barracks

**Combat Encounter Level 18 (10,000 XP)**

When he's not out hunting or training hell hounds, the king's fire giant houndmaster rests here with his monstrous hell hound companion. Aarth is an old fire giant who has seen nearly fifty-five winters by his own reckoning. Despite his haggard appearance, however, he is as fierce as any of Snurre's warriors, and the other fire giants respect his wisdom.

**Perception DC 23:** A character listening at the door hears the grunts and groans of the arm-wrestling giants, as well as the loud snores of a third giant.

**Light:** Bright light (torches).

**Monsters:** Aarth (fire giant houndmaster), Nvilka (firebred hell hound alpha), 2 fire giant knights.

**When the characters see area 14A, read:**
*Wrought iron beds line the walls here, including a half-dozen bunks of normal size and two giant-sized beds. Two iron chests sit on the floor near the giant beds.*

The fire giant knights are arm wrestling at the table, but they spot intruders as soon as the doors are fully opened.

**When the characters see area 14B, read:**
*This room contains several alcoves concealed with chain curtains, as well as a large water basin set into the far wall.*

Loud snores emanate from one alcove if Aarth is still asleep. The enormous hell hound Nvilka is chewing on a mammoth bone outside the curtain until she becomes aware of intruders.

The ceiling is 40 feet high throughout.

**14A. West Barracks:** The oversized iron beds and their chests belong to the fire giant knights. The smaller iron bunks are sized for azers. Between this area and the east barracks (area 14B) stand four more iron chests, including a locked chest belonging to Aarth.

**14B. East Barracks:** Four chain-curtained alcoves conceal giant-sized wrought iron beds. Unless he has been previously woken, Aarth is sleeping in one of these beds, while Nvilka lies curled up outside the alcove. A 5-foot-high basalt basin contains drinking water. The basin is fed by a rain spout carved into the wall above it.

**Treasure:** This area contains six large iron chests. Five are unlocked and contain a total of 2,500 gp as well as several mundane items (see "Treasure," page 3). The chest nearest to Aarth's bed belongs to the houndmaster and is locked. Aarth carries the key, or the lock can be picked with a DC 25 Thievery check. Inside the houndmaster's chest is a pouch of 25 pp, a set of manacles inlaid with small gems and emblazoned with the symbol of Torog (1,500 gp), and mundane items (see "Treasure," page 3).

**Tactics:** As soon as he wakes, Aarth throws down *fire caltrops* as often as possible, knowing that he and his allies are immune to that power's effect. He stays close to Nvilka to benefit from *loyal defender*, using *binding chain* to restrain dangerous melee combatants.

Nvilka targets enemies with *burning gaze*, staying clear of melee combatants to avoid opportunity attacks. She then follows up with *fiery breath* or *bite*. When an enemy adjacent to Nvilka attacks Aarth, she uses his *loyal defender* power to respond.

In between *longsword* and *throwing hammer* attacks, the fire giant knights use *flame's lure* to slide enemies through zones of fire caltrops, keeping the adventurers out of position for attacks against Aarth.

**Fire Giant Houndmaster** **Level 19 Controller**
Large elemental humanoid (fire, giant) XP 2,400

**HP** 180; **Bloodied** 90 **Initiative** +10
**AC** 33, **Fortitude** 33, **Reflex** 28, **Will** 31 **Perception** +18
**Speed** 7
**Resist** 15 fire

**Standard Actions**

⊕ **Spiked Chain** (fire, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 4 (one creature); +24 vs. AC
*Hit:* 2d10 + 16 fire damage, and the target falls prone.
*Effect:* The giant slides the target up to 2 squares.

**Binding Chain** (fire, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 4 (one creature); +22 vs. Fortitude
*Hit:* 2d10 + 16 fire damage, and the target is restrained until the start of the giant's next turn. While the target is restrained, the giant cannot use *binding chain* and the range of the giant's *spiked chain* power is reduced to 1.

**Minor Actions**

**Fire Caltrops** (fire, zone) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞
*Effect:* Area burst 1 within 10. The burst creates a zone that lasts until the end of the giant's next turn. The zone is difficult terrain for all but fire creatures. A creature that enters a square in the zone takes 10 fire damage. A creature can take this damage only once per turn.

**Triggered Actions**

**Loyal Defender** ✦ **At-Will**
*Trigger:* An enemy hits the giant with an attack while the giant is adjacent to a beast ally.
*Effect (Immediate Interrupt):* The beast ally can make a basic attack as a free action against the triggering enemy.

**Skills** Endurance +19, Intimidate +16
**Str** 22 (+15) **Dex** 13 (+10) **Wis** 18 (+13)
**Con** 20 (+14) **Int** 10 (+9) **Cha** 15 (+11)
**Alignment** evil **Languages** Common, Giant
**Equipment** chainmail, spiked chain

**Firebred Hell Hound Alpha** **Level 20 Brute**
Large elemental beast (fire) XP 2,800

**HP** 236; **Bloodied** 118 **Initiative** +14
**AC** 32, **Fortitude** 33, **Reflex** 30, **Will** 32 **Perception** +21
**Speed** 8
**Resist** 15 fire

**Traits**

**Fire Shield** (fire) ✦ **Aura** 1
Any enemy that enters the aura or starts its turn there takes 1d10 fire damage. A creature can take this damage only once per turn.

**Standard Actions**

⊕ **Bite** (fire) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 1 (one creature); +25 vs. AC
*Hit:* 3d10 + 17 fire damage.

**Fiery Breath** (fire) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞
*Attack:* Close blast 3 (creatures in the blast); +23 vs. Reflex
*Hit:* 3d12 + 18 fire damage.
*Miss:* Half damage.

**Minor Actions**

**Burning Gaze** (gaze) ✦ **At-Will** (1/round)
*Attack:* Ranged 5 (one creature); +23 vs. Fortitude
*Hit:* The target gains vulnerable 10 fire until the start of the hound's next turn.

**Str** 24 (+17) **Dex** 19 (+14) **Wis** 23 (+16)
**Con** 26 (+18) **Int** 3 (+6) **Cha** 15 (+12)
**Alignment** evil **Languages** –

**2 Fire Giant Knights** **Level 19 Soldier**
Large elemental humanoid (fire, giant) XP 2,400 each

**HP** 182; **Bloodied** 91 **Initiative** +13
**AC** 35, **Fortitude** 34, **Reflex** 29, **Will** 29 **Perception** +14
**Speed** 7
**Resist** 15 fire

**Traits**

**Fiery Defender** (fire) ✦ **Aura** 2
While in the aura, an unmarked enemy that uses an attack power that fails to target a creature that has this aura active takes 15 fire damage.

**Standard Actions**

⊕ **Longsword** (fire, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 2 (one creature); +24 vs. AC
*Hit:* 2d10 + 16 fire damage.

**Throwing Hammer** (fire, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Ranged 10 (one creature); +24 vs. AC
*Hit:* 2d8 + 16 fire damage, and the target falls prone.

**Flame's Lure** (fire) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞
*Attack:* Close burst 3 (enemies in the burst); +22 vs. Will
*Hit:* The giant slides the target up to 3 squares into a space adjacent to the giant, and the target takes ongoing 15 fire damage (save ends).

**Str** 24 (+16) **Dex** 14 (+11) **Wis** 10 (+9)
**Con** 22 (+15) **Int** 10 (+9) **Cha** 14 (+11)
**Alignment** evil **Languages** Common, Giant
**Equipment** plate armor, light shield, longsword, 3 throwing hammers

## 15. Temple of the Elder Elemental Eye

**Combat Encounter Level 21 (17,600 XP)**

This temple predates the construction of the rest of Snurre's Hall, though the identity of its builders remains unknown. The temple is dedicated to Tharizdun, the evil god believed to have created the Abyss and whose portfolio includes madness and annihilation. Rarely referred to by name, Tharizdun is more commonly known as the Chained God or the Elder Elemental Eye.

This temple has seen some use of late. A drow priestess named Eclavdra led a contingent of dark elves to Snurre's Hall a few months ago, hoping to learn the secrets of the temple and help the giants in their war against the elves, humans, dwarves, and other surface-dwelling races. These drow are the true power behind the giant uprisings that the adventurers have vowed to crush.

Characters can complete a minor quest by confronting Eclavdra (see "Quests," page 2). The drow priestess is not alone in the temple, however, and she has an escape route. A purple stone orb on the balcony has the power to teleport creatures to area 23D. If Eclavdra eludes the party, the characters might catch up with her in area 24.

**Light:** Bright light (torches).

**Monsters:** Eclavdra, 2 drow underpriests, 2 fire giants. Taz'zt and Virchiln might be here as well if they were driven from areas 2 and 13, respectively. Add them to the room description. Their XP is not included in this encounter.

**Trap:** Altar of the Eye.

**If the characters enter area 15B through the northeast doors, read:**

*A strange temple opens up beyond the doors. Twisted black pillars support the dark ceiling, with strange shapes like screaming faces reflected in each. Above the west row of pillars stands a balcony whose railing of purple stone has been sculpted to resemble entwined tentacles. The walls of the temple are a cloudy purple hue, set with torches that burn with a multicolored flame.*

Characters can also enter the temple by way of the balcony, but they must notice an illusory wall blocking the stairs first (see 15A, below).

**If the characters enter area 15B by way of the balcony, read:**

*Beyond the illusory wall, a wide staircase leads up to a balcony overlooking a strange temple. The balcony railing is sculpted from purple stone, carved to resemble entwined tentacles. The twisted black pillars that support the balcony and the ceiling overhead appear to have screaming faces reflected in them. Torches along the temple's purple walls burn with a multicolored flame but leave the balcony in shadow. In that dim light, you can see a black stone pedestal rising from the balcony floor, a purple orb nestled on top of it.*

**Whichever way the characters entered, continue with:**

*At the far end of the temple, three steps rise to form a wide, semicircular dais. On the lowest tier sits a large blackened drum and a wooden rack festooned with silver chimes. On the middle tier, an altar block of dark gray stone is flanked by two bronze braziers and six candelabra set with black candles. Hanging from the ceiling above the topmost tier is a small black metal triangle and a matching metal cylinder. Set into the cloudy purple wall behind the dais is a twenty-foot-tall inlay of amber-like stone—an inverted equilateral triangle inscribed with a "Y" that touches the triangle's three sides.*

*At the dais, two female drow wearing purple and black ceremonial robes are in the process of lighting the black candles while two fire giants clad in chainmail stand nearby. On the balcony, a shadowy figure looms.*

**If the characters enter area 15B by way of the stairs leading up to the balcony, read:**

*The dark figure on the balcony holds a rod with four squirming tentacles rising from the top.*

Raeme and Sziraz, two female drow underpriests, are lighting candles, preparing to perform the ritual that activates the altar. Eclavdra watches from the balcony, waiting for the ritual to begin when Virchiln (area 13) returns with a sacrifice. (If Virchiln has already returned because the adventurers raided the prison, the drow are planning to use one of the characters as a sacrifice when they make their inevitable attack.)

Eclavdra is drawn to this place and the secrets it conceals. She knows that the altar has great divinatory powers, and that it demands a living sacrifice in exchange for that forbidden knowledge. Eclavdra uses what she learns for her own benefit, as well as the benefit of her giant allies.

Characters who explore the temple and succeed on a DC 25 Religion check recognize that the site is dedicated to the Elder Elemental Eye. A DC 35 Religion check is enough to know that this entity is also known by the name Tharizdun, the god of madness and the creator of the Abyss.

**15A. Illusory Wall:** An illusory wall conceals a staircase leading up to the temple balcony. The wall blocks line of sight but not line of effect for creatures to the north of it. Creatures on the south side of the illusory wall can see through it clearly. A successful DC 32 Perception check reveals the illusion, as does interacting with the wall.

**15B. Temple and Balcony:** The vaulted ceiling of this chamber is 50 feet high at the walls and 75 feet high at its peak. The twisted obsidian pillars that support the ceiling catch the light and reflect it back in ominous-seeming ways, but they present no real threat.

The obsidian balcony suspended along the east wall stands 15 feet above the floor.

*Teleportation Orb:* The balcony's 4-foot-high obsidian pedestal has a 6-inch-diameter orb of purple stone resting in an indentation atop it. Touching the orb causes twenty-four small golden glyphs to appear on its surface. If the correct sequence of glyphs is touched (a standard action), the creature touching them is teleported to area 23D. Figuring out the correct sequence requires 1 minute and a DC 32 Arcana check (trained only). Touching the wrong sequence or removing the orb from the pedestal causes the orb to vanish for 24 hours, after which it returns to the pedestal.

**15C. Dais:** The three tiers of this semicircular dais lead up to the great symbol of the Elder Elemental Eye inlaid in the south wall. None of the items on the dais are magical.

*First Tier:* The first tier is of black stone shot through with veins of violet. On the east side of the tier rests a great drum of blackened skin and chitinous material. On the west side stands a wooden rack from which hang nine silver chimes (100 gp each).

*Second Tier:* The second tier is dark gray stone shot through with specks of purple and orange. A large stone altar block of porous rusty-black rock sits in the middle of this tier, flanked by bronze braziers that have turned green with age. (See "Altar of the Eye" for more information.) To the left and right of the braziers, arranged in a triangular formation, are two sets of three candelabra. Each candelabrum is made of corroded bronze and has three branches, each of which holds a fat black candle that burns with a purple flame.

*Third Tier:* The third tier is dull black stone with whorls of mauve, spattered with dried blood. Above this tier, an inlay of amber-like stone is set into the cloudy purple wall—a 20-foot-wide inverted equilateral triangle, with an enclosed Y whose points touch the triangle's sides. Beneath this, hanging on iron chains from the ceiling, are a triangle and a cylinder of black metal.

**Tactics:** When the characters arrive, the drow underpriests are preparing to activate the altar. Doing so requires that a character strike the iron triangle with the iron cylinder (a standard action). When combat begins, each underpriest attempts to strike the triangle so the altar's *lurid eye* appears (see "Altar of the Eye," below).

Eclavdra opens with *insidious offer*. After that, she prefers to command her allies, but she is bold enough to use *blinking escape* to teleport to the floor and fight, or to walk from the balcony to the main temple entrance. She fights until she is bloodied or until her allies in the temple are slain. At that point, she uses the orb atop the balcony to escape to area 23D. If she can't reach the orb, she flees the temple and runs through the wall of tentacles (area 16A), then heads down to the third level to alert her remaining allies and hole up in area 24. If Virchiln is with Eclavdra, he gladly sacrifices himself to enable her escape.

Raeme and Sziraz use *poison web* to snare enemies before attacking with their *tentacle rods*. They fight in tandem with the fire giants, which do their best to defend the drow. Raeme, Sziraz, and the fire giants fight to the death.

If Taz'zt is present, he hides behind a pillar until an opportunity to gain combat advantage presents itself.

| **2 Fire Giants** | **Level 18 Soldier** |
|---|---|
| Large elemental humanoid (fire, giant) | XP 2,000 each |
| **HP** 174; **Bloodied** 87 | **Initiative** +11 |
| **AC** 34, **Fortitude** 34, **Reflex** 28, **Will** 28 | **Perception** +14 |
| **Speed** 8 | |
| **Resist** 15 fire | |
| **Standard Actions** | |
| ⊕ **Searing Greatsword** (fire, weapon) ✦ **At-Will** | |
| *Attack:* Melee 2 (one creature); +23 vs. AC | |
| *Hit:* 2d12 + 13 fire damage. | |
| *Effect:* The giant marks the target until the end of the giant's next turn. | |
| ⇢ **Sweeping Sword** (fire, weapon) ✦ **At-Will** | |
| *Attack:* Close blast 2 (enemies in the blast); +23 vs. AC | |
| *Hit:* 2d12 + 13 fire damage. | |
| *Effect:* The giant marks the target until the end of the giant's next turn. | |
| **Str** 23 (+15) **Dex** 11 (+9) | **Wis** 10 (+9) |
| **Con** 22 (+15) **Int** 10 (+9) | **Cha** 11 (+9) |
| **Alignment** evil **Languages** Giant | |
| **Equipment** chainmail, greatsword | |

**Eclavdra Eilservs** **Level 20 Elite Soldier (Leader)**
Medium fey humanoid, drow XP 5,600

**HP** 380; **Bloodied** 190 **Initiative** +20
**AC** 36, **Fortitude** 31, **Reflex** 33, **Will** 32 **Perception** +16
**Speed** 7 Darkvision
**Saving Throws** +2; **Action Points** 1

**Standard Actions**

⊕ **Tentacle Rod** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 3 (one creature); +25 vs. AC
*Hit:* 3d8 + 15 damage, and the target is slowed (save ends). In addition, the target cannot benefit from immunity or resistance to poison until the end of the encounter.

**Emissary's Request** ✦ **At-Will**
*Effect:* Ranged 20 (one ally); the target can make an at-will attack or charge as a free action. A demon, drow, or spider ally gains a +2 power bonus to the attack roll.

**Double Attack** ✦ **At-Will**
*Effect:* Eclavdra uses *tentacle rod* twice, *emissary's request* twice, or each power once.

**Insidious Offer** (charm, psychic) ✦ **Recharge** when first bloodied
*Attack:* Ranged 10 (one creature); +23 vs. Will
*Hit:* The target chooses to become dominated (save ends) or take 40 psychic damage instead.

**Minor Actions**

**Entrancing Beauty** (charm, psychic) ✦ **At-Will** (1/round)
*Attack:* Close burst 5 (enemies in the burst); +23 vs. Will
*Hit:* Eclavdra pulls the target up to 2 squares.

**Triggered Actions**

**On Your Knees** ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞
*Trigger:* An enemy is hit by *tentacle rod.*
*Attack (No Action):* Melee 3 (the triggering enemy); +23 vs. Will
*Hit:* The target falls prone and cannot stand up (save ends).

**Blinking Escape** (teleportation) ✦ **At-Will**
*Trigger:* An area attack or a close attack hits Eclavdra.
*Effect (Immediate Reaction):* Eclavdra teleports up to 6 squares and gains partial concealment until the end of her next turn.

**Skills** Bluff +22, Insight +21, Intimidate +22, Religion +22
**Str** 16 (+13) **Dex** 26 (+18) **Wis** 22 (+16)
**Con** 22 (+16) **Int** 24 (+17) **Cha** 24 (+17)
**Alignment** chaotic evil **Languages** Abyssal, Common, Elven
**Equipment** robe, tentacle rod

**2 Drow Underpriests** **Level 17 Controller**
Medium fey humanoid, drow XP 1,600 each

**HP** 160; **Bloodied** 80 **Initiative** +10
**AC** 31, **Fortitude** 27, **Reflex** 29, **Will** 32 **Perception** +10
**Speed** 6 Darkvision

**Standard Actions**

⊕ **Tentacle Rod** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 2 (one creature); +22 vs. AC
*Hit:* 2d8 + 16 damage.
*Effect:* The drow can slide the target up to 2 squares.

**Poison Web** (poison) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Close blast 3 (creatures in the blast); +20 vs. Fortitude
*Hit:* 2d8 + 5 poison damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).
*First Failed Saving Throw:* The target is instead restrained (save ends).

**Tentacle Lash** ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞
*Effect:* The drow uses *tentacle rod* twice.

**Minor Actions**

**Darkfire** ✦ **Encounter**
*Attack:* Ranged 10 (one creature); +20 vs. Reflex
*Hit:* The target grants combat advantage and cannot benefit from invisibility or concealment until the end of the drow's next turn.

**Skills** Insight +15, Religion +17, Stealth +15
**Str** 12 (+9) **Dex** 15 (+10) **Wis** 15 (+10)
**Con** 16 (+11) **Int** 18 (+12) **Cha** 20 (+13)
**Alignment** chaotic evil **Languages** Abyssal, Common, Elven
**Equipment** robe, lesser tentacle rod

## Altar of the Eye

If a creature touches or attacks the altar, it changes from solid black to translucent amethyst with a black, amorphous center. It remains in this state for 1 hour before reverting to its normal form.

While the altar is translucent, if the drum is beaten, the chimes rung, the black candles lit, and the black metal triangle is struck with the black metal cylinder, the altar awakens. A golden eye manifests within the altar block and uses *lurid eye* each round. When a creature is compelled to touch the altar a second time, the black mass in the center of the altar swells and manifests purple veins, the altar's eye turns a fiery orange-red, and the altar ceases to dominate creatures. Instead, two purple-black tentacles emerge from the altar and attack each round. If no targets are within reach, the tentacles withdraw into the altar, and the altar reverts to its dormant state.

A creature in the room possessing a *tentacle rod* can determine the altar's targets as a free action.

### ECLAVDRA'S "DEATH"

The Eclavdra presented here is lower in level than the version appearing in *Monster Manual 3*. Eclavdra is a powerful figure in drow society. As the leader of House Eilservs, a great house in the drow city of Erelhei-Cinlu, she has virtually limitless resources. If she perishes in the hall of the fire giant king, there's a good chance she'll be back, either because her servitors raise her from the dead or because of a secret pact with Lolth. It's also possible that the Eclavdra who dies in this encounter is a false Eclavdra—a clone or a loyal servant magically altered to look like the true Eclavdra. The choice is yours.

Otherwise, the altar attacks creatures at random. The use of a *tentacle rod* requires devotion to the altar and to the Elemental Eye. The full effect of gaining control of a *tentacle rod* is not detailed here, but anyone who does so becomes a chaotic evil character under the DM's control.

If a tentacle reduces a creature to 0 hit points or fewer, the tentacle pulls the creature into the altar and consumes it, destroying it utterly. After consuming such a sacrifice, the tentacle withdraws into the altar, the altar reverts to its dormant state, and a purple crystal flask appears on top of it.

The crystal flask holds black liquid. A character who quaffs the contents of the flask learns the true answer to any three questions. This fact can be ascertained with a DC 35 Religion check. The liquid evaporates instantly if removed from the temple, and the questions can be answered only while the imbiber remains in the temple.

## Development

Confronting Eclavdra completes a minor quest (see "Quests," page 2). If Eclavdra escapes, the characters encounter her again in area 24.

**Altar of the Eye** **Level 19 Elite Trap**
Object XP 4,800

**Detect** automatic **Initiative** +15
**HP** 270
**AC** 33, **Fortitude** 30, **Reflex** 30, **Will** –
**Immune** necrotic, poison, psychic, forced movement, all conditions, ongoing damage

**Identify** (Arcana or Dungeoneering)
✦ **DC 24:** The stone from which the altar is hewn is not of this world.

**Identify** (Insight)
✦ **DC 17:** The character experiences a terrible sense of foreboding as he or she approaches the altar.

**Identify** (Religion)
✦ **DC 24:** The altar is the centerpiece of a religious ritual that requires the lighting of black candles, the beating of a drum, the ringing of chimes, and the striking of the iron triangle.
✦ **DC 33:** Touching the altar is the first step in calling the power of the Elder Elemental Eye, which might grant a boon—but the altar is anathema to the gods, so that touching it with a holy symbol might damage it. Doing so is likely to destroy the utilized holy symbol, reducing it to *residuum*.

**Traits**

**All Sight**
The altar's attacks ignore cover, concealment, and invisibility, as well as whether a creature is hidden.

**Standard Actions**

**Lurid Eye** (charm) ✦ **At-Will**
*Requirement:* The altar must be awakened and must have no tentacles.
*Attack:* Ranged 20 (one creature) +22 vs. Will
*Hit:* The target is dominated (save ends). While dominated, the target uses its standard action to move toward the altar. When adjacent to the altar, the target touches the altar as a free action, causing the altar to sprout two tentacles.

**Tentacle** ✦ **At-Will**
*Requirement:* The altar must have tentacles.
*Attack:* Melee 20 (one creature); +24 vs. AC
*Hit:* The target is grabbed (escape DC 24). While grabbed by a tentacle, the target is weakened and takes ongoing 20 damage. If this damage reduces the target to 0 hit points or fewer, the target is pulled into the altar as a free action and annihilated. A tentacle cannot attack while grabbing a creature.

**Double Attack** ✦ **Recharge** when no target is grabbed by a tentacle
*Effect:* The altar uses *tentacle* twice.

**Countermeasures**

✦ **Attack:** A tentacle has the same defenses as the altar. If a tentacle takes damage, it releases any creature it is grabbing.
✦ **Blaspheme:** If a character uses a minor action to touch the altar with a magic holy symbol of any deity other than Tharizdun, the altar takes 15 damage per plus of a common item, 20 damage per plus of an uncommon item, and 30 damage per plus of a rare item. A holy symbol used in this way is reduced to an amount of *residuum* based on the item's rarity: 20 percent of a common item's gp value, 50 percent of an uncommon item's gp value, and 100 percent of a rare item's gp value.

# 16. Wall of Tentacles

**Combat Encounter Level 17 (8,000 XP)**

Eclavdra's drow have placed a horrific barricade across the passage they use to reach the lowest level of Snurre's Hall.

**Light:** Bright light in area 16A (oil-filled braziers), dim light in area 16B (candles).

**Monsters:** 2 drider assassins.

**Trap:** Wall of tentacles.

**When the characters see area 16A, read:**

*The passageway bulges north, revealing a pair of stone basins filled with flaming oil. Between them, a twenty-foot-high, twenty-foot-wide section of the north wall has been carved to resemble a tangled nest of shiny black tentacles. The tentacles are more like supple flesh than hard stone.*

**When the characters see area 16B, read:**

*Black candles affixed to three tall, iron candelabra illuminate this twenty-foot-tall rough-hewn chamber, but the light is dim and eerie. Black gossamer curtains divide sections of the room, making it difficult to see every wall and corner.*

**16A. Wall of Tentacles:** The wall fills 4 squares, blocking the passage to area 16B. Bypassing the wall requires a tentacle rod, three of which are in area 15. Two basalt basins filled with flaming oil flank the wall and illuminate the hallway.

**16B. Drider Guardpost:** Driders lurk in this dimly lit cave, and they attack any intruders. Rough-hewn steps descend 75 feet to area 21A. Gossamer curtains hang from the ceiling. They grant partial concealment to creatures on the other side of them from an attacker. Pulling down a curtain takes a standard action.

**Tactics:** The driders lurk near the ceiling of 16B at the start of the encounter. They try to use *web* on creatures within reach of the wall of tentacles, and they use *phase spider step* on alternate rounds so that at least one of them is invisible at any time.

**2 Drider Assassins** — **Level 18 Lurker**
Large fey humanoid, drow (spider) — XP 2,000 each

**HP** 134; **Bloodied** 67 — **Initiative** +20
**AC** 32, **Fortitude** 30, **Reflex** 31, **Will** 29 — **Perception** +14
**Speed** 8, climb 8 (spider climb)

**Standard Actions**

⨺ **Longsword** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 2 (one creature); +23 vs. AC
*Hit:* 2d10 + 15 damage, or 4d10 + 30 damage if the drider is invisible when it attacks.

**Phase Spider Step** (illusion, teleportation) ✦ **At-Will**
*Effect:* The drider becomes invisible until the end of its next turn or until it attacks, then teleports up to 4 squares.

**Minor Actions**

**Darkfire** ✦ **Encounter**
*Attack:* Ranged 10 (one creature); +21 vs. Reflex
*Hit:* The target grants combat advantage and cannot benefit from invisibility or concealment until the end of the drider's next turn.

**Web** ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞
*Attack:* Ranged 5 (one creature); +21 vs. Reflex
*Hit:* The target is restrained (save ends).

**Skills** Stealth +21

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Str** 23 (+15) | **Dex** 24 (+16) | **Wis** 11 (+9) |
| **Con** 20 (+14) | **Int** 10 (+9) | **Cha** 20 (+14) |

**Alignment** chaotic evil **Languages** Elven
**Equipment** chainmail, longword

## Wall of Tentacles

The wall rolls initiative when a character attacks it or touches it with something other than a tentacle rod. The tentacles can attack creatures on either side of the wall.

**Wall of Tentacles** — **Level 18 Elite Trap**
Object — XP 4,000

**Detect** automatic — **Initiative** +15
**HP** 240
**AC** 32, **Fortitude** 28, **Reflex** 30, **Will** –
**Immune** necrotic, poison, psychic, forced movement, all conditions, ongoing damage

**Identify** (Arcana)
✦ **DC 23:** The character realizes what the wall is, as well as that a special key, implement, or command word is needed to pass through the wall unmolested.

**Identify** (Dungeoneering)
✦ **DC 23:** The character realizes that the wall of tentacles blocks a passageway.

**Traits**

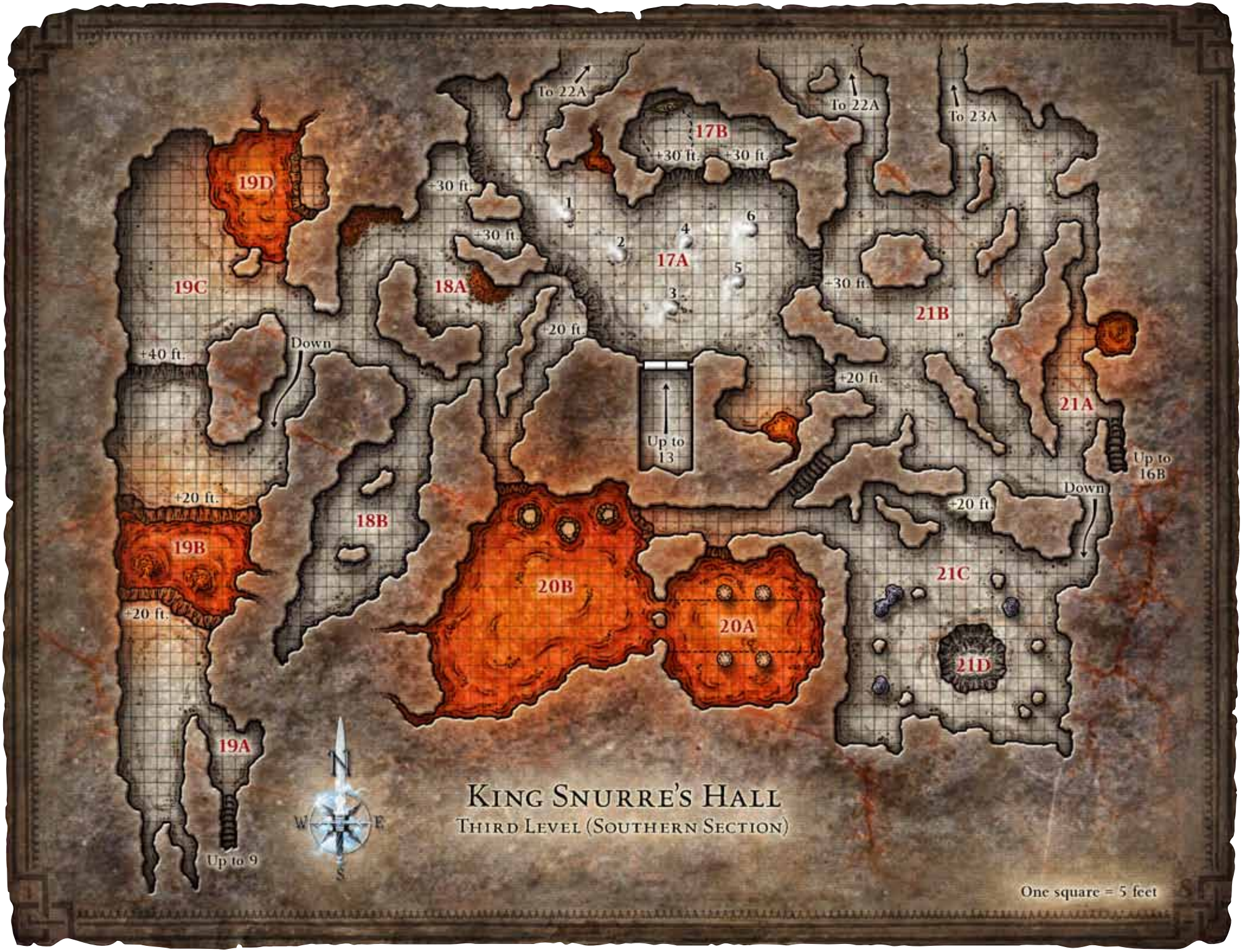
**All Sight**
The wall's attacks ignore cover, concealment, and invisibility, as well as whether a creature is hidden.

**Standard Actions**

**Tentacle Lash** ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Close blast 5 (enemies in the blast); +23 vs. AC
*Hit:* The target is grabbed (escape DC 23) and takes ongoing 10 damage while grabbed.

**Countermeasures**

✦ **Tentacle Rod:** The wall attacks no creature that carries a tentacle rod. A creature that touches a tentacle rod to the wall (minor action) opens an 8-foot-high, 4-foot-wide oval aperture that remains open until the end of the creature's next turn. As long as the aperture remains open, the wall does not attack.


To 22A
To 22A
To 23A
17B
+30 ft.
+30 ft.
19D
+30 ft.
1
6
+30 ft.
4
2
17A
5
19C
18A
3
+30 ft.
21B
+20 ft.
Down
+40 ft.
+20 ft.
Up to 13
21A
Up to 16B
Down
+20 ft.
+20 ft.
18B
19B
20B
21C
20A
+20 ft.
21D
19A
N
W
E
S
Up to 9
King Snurre's Hall
Third Level (Southern Section)
One square = 5 feet

## Third Level (Areas 17–24)

This level consists of natural lava-formed caves. Most of the walls are worn smooth by heat friction, but handholds are abundant. Climbing one of them requires a DC 20 Athletics check unless otherwise noted.

**Ceilings:** Tunnels have natural ceilings 20 feet high, while the ceilings in larger chambers range from 30 to 75 feet high.

**Illumination:** Some areas contain molten lava, which creates light of various types. All other areas are dark.

## 17. Red Dragon's Lair

**Combat Encounter Level 22 (24,250 XP) and Skill Challenge Level 22 (8,300 XP)**

Brazzemal, a male red dragon, claims this cavern. He has lived here longer than the fire giants but abides their presence in exchange for tribute and the occasional free meal. Snurre reached an accord with the dragon and occasionally rides it into battle.

**Light:** Dim light (smaller lava pools).

**Monsters:** Brazzemal (elder red dragon), 3 drow skulkers.

**Hazards:** Fumaroles.

**When the characters see area 17A, read:**

*This natural cavern soars to a height of seventy-five feet, and a pair of small lava pools to the northwest and southeast dimly light it. The walls are lined with ledges that connect to dark tunnels.*

*Six hissing fumaroles, each one a cone-shaped mound of rock, rise up from the floor of the cavern and vent plumes of smoke. Occasionally, one of them erupts in a fountain of flame and disgorges a cloud of embers.*

**Perception DC 24:** *A huge red dragon sleeps atop one of the northern ledges. Thin tendrils of smoke issue from its nostrils.*

**Perception DC 33:** *Three drow lurk in the shadows atop the western ledge, watching the cave closely.*

As soon as one or more party members try to move through area 17A, have the characters roll initiative, and roll initiative for the fumaroles. The drow attack as soon as they're aware of the party, but Brazzemal might take a moment to speak to the characters.

The dragon sleeps in his lair overlooking area 17A. He awakens automatically to the sound of the iron doors opening, the sound of someone picking through his treasure hoard, or the sound of the drow attacking.

If the characters enter this area by a route other than the southern iron doors and dispatch the drow quickly and quietly, they can attempt a DC 17 group Stealth check to avoid waking the dragon. The fumaroles fill the cave with enough ambient noise that the sleeping dragon has learned to tune out all but certain sounds.

**17A. Fumarole Cavern:** Various rough ledges overlook this 75-foot-high cave. The ledge heights are marked on the map. Climbing a ledge requires DC 15 Athletics checks. Atop one of these are three drow that watch for intruders.

*Fumaroles:* This natural cavern contains six 4-foot-high cones of rock that vent smoke and fire. These fumaroles are hazards that the red dragon uses to weaken enemies (see "Fumaroles" below for more information). In addition to being natural hazards, the fumaroles are difficult terrain.

*Lava Pools:* In addition to the fumaroles, the cavern contains two lava pools. Any creature that enters the basin or starts its turn there takes 15 fire damage and ongoing 15 fire damage (save ends). A creature can take this damage only once per turn.

**17B. Brazzemal's Lair:** This 30-foot-high cave overlooks area 17A and contains the dragon's nest and treasure. Brazzemal keeps his treasure piled in an old rowboat, which he can quickly pick up and relocate if he's forced to abandon his lair. Cast-off dragon scales and the charred bones of past victims surround the rowboat. Inside the boat are the following treasures: a suit of +5 *curseforged chainmail* (or another level 23 uncommon or rare magic item), a golden chair studded with gems (25,000 gp), a gold-inlaid folding game board with jewel game pieces (15,000 gp), a gem-studded staff (7,500 gp), five pieces of jewelry (1,500 gp each), 150 pp, and 50,000 gp.

*Chimney:* The dragon uses a wide chimney in the ceiling to enter and exit its lair. The chimney's walls are glassy smooth but have abundant handholds, and they require DC 20 Athletics checks to climb. The chimney climbs 400 feet before breaking the surface atop the basalt hill that contains Snurre's Hall.

**Tactics:** Brazzemal is haughty and arrogant, but not above flattery and bribery. Characters who wish to avoid or end a fight with the dragon can attempt a skill challenge to forge a truce (see the skill challenge below). In combat, Brazzemal uses *frightful presence* to stun as many enemies as possible before blasting them with his *breath weapon*. He fights to the death.

The drow stay on the fringes of the cavern, targeting enemies with *darkfire* before attacking them with poisoned crossbow bolts. If two drow are killed, or if the dragon is bloodied or persuaded not to attack the characters, any remaining drow retreat to area 23C to alert their colleagues.

### Skill Challenge: Negotiating a Truce

Brazzemal is a vicious, temperamental creature that regards most humanoids as food. Negotiating a truce with the dragon requires the characters to show him the respect and deference he feels he deserves. The dragon can also be intimidated, but the chances of success with this tactic are greater once the dragon is bloodied. This skill challenge can be performed during or in lieu of combat.

**Level:** 22 (8,300 XP).

**3 Drow Skulkers** **Level 18 Minion Skirmisher**
Medium fey humanoid XP 500 each

**HP** 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. **Initiative** +16
**AC** 32, **Fortitude** 29, **Reflex** 31, **Will** 30 **Perception** +15
**Speed** 7 Darkvision

**Traits**

**Personal Darkness**
The drow has total concealment while moving.

**Standard Actions**

⊕ **Short Sword** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 1 (one creature); +23 vs. AC
*Hit:* 13 damage.

➶ **Hand Crossbow** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Ranged 10 (one creature); +23 vs. AC
*Hit:* 13 damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).
*First Failed Saving Throw:* The target is also weakened (save ends both).
*Second Failed Saving Throw:* The target instead falls unconscious until the end of the encounter.

**Minor Actions**

➶ **Darkfire** ✦ **Encounter**
*Attack:* Ranged 10 (one creature); +21 vs. Reflex
*Hit:* The target grants combat advantage and cannot benefit from invisibility or concealment until the end of the drow's next turn.

**Skills** Stealth +19
**Str** 15 (+11) **Dex** 20 (+14) **Wis** 13 (+10)
**Con** 11 (+9) **Int** 15 (+11) **Cha** 16 (+12)
**Alignment** evil **Languages** Abyssal, Common, Elven
**Equipment** leather armor, short sword, hand crossbow, 20 bolts

**Elder Red Dragon** **Level 22 Solo Soldier**
Huge natural magical beast (dragon) XP 20,750

**HP** 832; **Bloodied** 416 **Initiative** +18
**AC** 38, **Fortitude** 36, **Reflex** 33, **Will** 32 **Perception** +19
**Speed** 8, fly 10 Darkvision
**Resist** 20 fire
**Saving Throws** +5; **Action Points** 2

**Traits**

**Action Recovery**
Whenever the dragon ends its turn, any dazing, stunning, or dominating effect on it ends.

**Instinctive Assault**
On an initiative of 10 + its initiative check, the dragon can use a free action to use *bite* or *claw*. If the dragon cannot use a free action to make this attack due to a dominating or stunning effect, then that effect ends instead of the dragon making the attack.

**Standard Actions**

⊕ **Bite** (fire) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 3 (one creature); +27 vs. AC.
*Hit:* 2d10 + 6 damage. The target is grabbed and takes ongoing 15 fire damage, or ongoing 25 fire damage if the dragon is bloodied, until the grab ends (escape DC 30).

**Claw** ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 3 (one or two creatures); +27 vs. AC. If the dragon targets only one creature, it can make this attack twice against that creature.
*Hit:* 3d10 + 14 damage, and the dragon grabs the target (escape DC 27) if it has fewer than two creatures grabbed.

**Immolate Foe** (fire) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞
*Attack:* Ranged 20 (one creature); +25 vs. Reflex
*Hit:* 4d10 + 7 fire damage, and ongoing 20 fire damage (save ends).
*Miss:* Half damage, and ongoing 10 fire damage (save ends).

**Breath Weapon** (fire) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞
*Attack:* Close blast 5 (creatures in the blast); +25 vs. Reflex
*Hit:* 4d12 + 17 fire damage.
*Miss:* Half damage.

**Triggered Actions**

**Tail Strike** ✦ **At-Will**
*Trigger:* An enemy leaves a square within 3 squares of the dragon.
*Attack (Immediate Reaction):* Melee 4 (triggering enemy); +25 vs. Reflex
*Hit:* 2d8 + 4 damage, and the target falls prone.

**Bloodied Breath** ✦ **Encounter**
*Trigger:* The dragon is first bloodied.
*Effect (Free Action): Breath weapon* recharges, and the dragon uses it.

**Skills** Bluff +18, Insight +19
**Str** 26 (+19) **Dex** 21 (+16) **Wis** 17 (+14)
**Con** 24 (+18) **Int** 14 (+13) **Cha** 15 (+13)
**Alignment** evil **Languages** Common, Draconic

**Complexity:** 2 (requires 6 successes before 3 failures).

**Primary Skills:** Arcana, Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate.

*Arcana (DC 27; standard action):* Brazzemal has a healthy respect for wizards and their ilk. The character tries to impress Brazzemal with knowledge of all things arcane.

*Bluff (DC 29; standard action):* The character tries to convince Brazzemal that the party works for Snurre, that the drow are planning to enslave the dragon and the characters have been sent to stop them, or some other lie intended to gain the dragon's trust or favor.

*Diplomacy (DC 27; standard action):* The character flatters Brazzemal, relates to the dragon on some level, offers the dragon something of value, or proposes a mutually beneficial arrangement.

*Intimidate (DC 36; standard action):* The character bullies Brazzemal into compliance. If Brazzemal is bloodied, the DC for this check decreases to 27.

**Secondary Skills:** Insight, Nature.

*Insight or Nature (DC 27; minor action):* The character's knowledge of red dragons or acute insight into this particular dragon's personality makes it easier to deal with Brazzemal. This check doesn't count as a success or failure in the challenge, but a successful check provides a +2 bonus to the character's next check made as part of this challenge.

**Success:** Brazzemal allows the characters to move through his lair unmolested and does not attack them as long as they disturb neither him nor his treasure.

**Failure:** Brazzemal attacks the characters, or he keeps fighting if already in combat.

## Fumaroles

The fumaroles roll initiative when the characters enter the cavern. On the fumaroles' initiative, one fumarole (determined randomly by rolling a d6 and consulting the map) erupts with fire and a burning hot cloud of embers.

| **Fumaroles** | **Level 18 Hazard** |
|---|---|
| Terrain | XP 2,000 |
| **Detect** automatic | **Initiative** +9 |
| **Immune** attacks | |
| **Identify** (Dungeoneering or Nature) | |
| ✦ DC 10: The character recognizes the cones as fumaroles that belch smoke and fire. | |
| ✦ DC 15: The character realizes that a fumarole deals fire damage in a close burst 2 whenever it erupts. | |
| **Standard Actions** | |
| ✧ **Fiery Eruption** (fire) ✦ **At-Will** | |
| *Effect:* One fumarole makes the following attack. | |
| *Attack:* Close burst 2 (creatures in the burst); +21 vs. Reflex | |
| *Hit:* 2d8 + 10 fire damage, and the target grants combat advantage and takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls (save ends). | |
| **Countermeasures** | |
| ✦ **Predict:** Dungeoneering or Nature DC 23 (minor action). *Success:* The character realizes which fumarole will erupt on the trap's next turn. | |

## Development

Combat against the dragon is loud enough for the creatures in area 22 to hear, but they do not investigate. If one or more of the drow escape, they inform the drow in area 23 that trouble is on the way.

# 18. Dragonscale Caves

**Combat Encounter Level 18 (10,000 XP)**

These caves are littered with molted red dragon scales. Eclavdra has transformed some of these molted scales into slithering, animate horrors that attack and constrict prey. She uses them to guard area 18B.

**Light:** None.

**Monsters:** 3 mind flayers unseen, 8 dragonscale sloughs.

**When the characters see area 18A, read:**

*Heaps of molted dragon scales litter these dark, meandering caves.*

**Perception DC 23:** One of the mounds of dragon scales moves.

**When the characters see area 18B, read:**

*Mineral deposits in the rock formations of this cavern glitter and sparkle like jewels.*

**Perception DC 32:** The character spots the closest mind flayer hiding in the cavern.

Eclavdra fears that her underlings might betray her as she commits to learning the darkest secrets of the Elder Elemental Eye. Without the knowledge of her fellow drow, the high priestess has brokered a secret deal with a group of mind flayers. If she senses that the other drow are turning against her, she plans to use the mind flayers to eliminate them. Until then, the mind flayers remain hidden in area 18B, attacking only creatures that blunder into their lair.

**18A. Dragonscale Sloughs:** Piles of molted red dragon scales litter the area.

**18B. Glittering Cave:** Sparkling mineral deposits in the walls reflect any light the characters bring to this cave. Three mind flayers lurk in the shadows. They secretly work for Eclavdra, keep to themselves, and attack intruders with the intention of devouring their brains and looting their corpses.

Each mind flayer carries a pouch of six gems (500 gp each) that Eclavdra gave to it.

**Tactics:** The dragonscale sloughs wait until the characters reach area 18B or 19C and engage other monsters in combat before attacking.

The mind flayers remain hidden until the characters detect them or stumble within range of their *mind-clouding blast*. At least one mind flayer tries to use *mind-clouding blast* every round while the others attack with their tentacles.

| **8 Dragonscale Sloughs** | **Level 18 Minion Lurker** |
|---|---|
| Medium natural animate (undead) | XP 500 each |
| **HP** 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. | **Initiative** +19 |
| **AC** 32, **Fortitude** 29, **Reflex** 30, **Will** 31 | **Perception** +11 |
| **Speed** 6, climb 6 (spider climb) | Darkvision |
| **Immune** disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic | |
| **Standard Actions** | |
| ⊕ **Grabbing Slam** ✦ **At-Will** | |
| *Attack:* Melee 1 (one creature); +23 vs. AC | |
| *Hit:* 13 damage, and the target is grabbed (escape DC 23). | |
| **Squeezing Scales** ✦ **At-Will** | |
| *Effect:* Melee 1 (one creature grabbed by the slough); the target takes 13 damage. | |
| **Skills** Stealth +20 | |
| **Str** 20 (+14) **Dex** 22 (+15) **Wis** 14 (+11) | |
| **Con** 22 (+15) **Int** 1 (+4) **Cha** 8 (+8) | |
| **Alignment** unaligned **Languages** – | |

| 3 Mind Flayers Unseen | Level 18 Lurker |
|---|---|
| Medium aberrant humanoid | XP 2,000 each |
| **HP** 126; **Bloodied** 63 | **Initiative** +20 |
| **AC** 32, **Fortitude** 28, **Reflex** 31, **Will** 30 | **Perception** +18 |
| **Speed** 7 | Darkvision |
| **Traits** | |
| **Unseen Focus** (illusion) | |
| The mind flayer is invisible while it has a creature grabbed. | |
| **Standard Actions** | |
| ⊕ **Tentacles** ✦ **At-Will** | |
| *Requirement:* The mind flayer must not have a creature grabbed. | |
| *Attack:* Melee 1 (one creature); +21 vs. Reflex. The attack automatically hits a dazed or stunned target. | |
| *Hit:* 1d6 + 6 damage, and the mind flayer grabs the target (escape DC 23) if it does not have a creature grabbed. | |
| ⸸ **Extract Brain** (healing) ✦ **At-Will** | |
| *Attack:* Melee 1 (one creature grabbed by the mind flayer); +21 vs. Fortitude | |
| *Hit:* 6d6 + 20 damage, and the target is dazed until it is no longer grabbed. If this attack reduces the target to 0 hit points or fewer, the target dies and the mind flayer regains 15 hit points. | |
| ✧ **Mind-Clouding Blast** (illusion, psychic) ✦ **Encounter** | |
| *Attack:* Close blast 5 (enemies in the blast); +21 vs. Will | |
| *Hit:* 3d8 + 7 psychic damage, and the target is dazed (save ends). | |
| *Miss:* Half damage. | |
| **Move Actions** | |
| **Mental Cloak** (illusion, teleportation) ✦ **Recharge** when an attack hits the mind flayer | |
| *Effect:* The mind flayer teleports a number of squares up to its speed, and it becomes invisible until the end of its next turn. | |
| **Skills** Arcana +20, Insight +18, Stealth +21 | |
| **Str** 18 (+13) **Dex** 25 (+16) **Wis** 18 (+13) | |
| **Con** 12 (+10) **Int** 23 (+15) **Cha** 22 (+15) | |
| **Alignment** evil **Languages** Deep Speech, telepathy 20 | |

# 19. Chimera Cavern

**Combat Encounter Level 17 (8,000 XP)**

A pit of molten lava splits this lengthy cavern, which serves as the lair for a mated pair of elder chimeras. The fire giants get along well with the chimeras and feed them prisoners to keep them happy.

**Light:** Bright light (lava waterfalls and pools).

**Monsters:** 2 elder chimeras.

**If the characters reach this cavern by the south stairs (area 19A), then as soon as they come within sight of the lava pit (area 19B), read:**

*A long cavern stretches out ahead, widening gradually as it progresses northward. The floor falls away into a pit of lava with twenty-foot-deep sloping sides. Two thin streams of lava cascade into the pit through cracks in the ceiling seventy-five feet overhead. Beyond the pit, a wide tunnel slopes upward, and two winged beasts watch you with great interest from the top of a high ledge.*

**When the characters come within sight of area 19D, read:**

*A pool of molten lava fills the northeast corner of a much larger cave. Across the pool, clinging to the eastern wall, is a black basalt ledge five feet above the lava's surface, and it has some bones and treasure on it.*

The ceiling of this cavern is 75 feet high. Due to their higher elevation, areas 19C–19D have only 35-foot-high ceilings.

**19A. Stairs Up:** Narrow, rough-hewn stairs ascend 75 feet to area 9.

**19B. Lava Pit:** The floor gives way to a pit that drops 20 feet into a pool of molten lava. The walls of the pit slope down at an angle, making them slightly easier to climb than vertical walls (DC 15 Athletics check). Two thin lava streams pour into the pit from fissures in the ceiling overhead. Two submerged channels near the floor of the pit slowly funnel the lava out of the pit and into area 20B. Any creature that enters the lava or starts its turn there takes 15 fire damage and ongoing 15 fire damage (save ends). A creature can take this damage only once per turn.

**19C. Ledge:** The two chimeras watch over their cavern from the edge this ledge (DC 20 Athletics to climb). The chimeras have an unobstructed view of the cavern south of their perch. They swoop down to attack intruders who enter the cavern by area 19A, or they hold position atop their ledge if they detect intruders approaching from the east.

**19D. Treasure:** The chimeras keep their treasure atop a 5-foot-high basalt ledge surrounded by a 10-foot-deep pool of lava (see area 19B for lava effects). On the ledge amid charred and jumbled bones are a gilded egg that has a tiny mithral dragon figurine inside it (7,500 gp), a charred human forearm wearing a scorched golden armband (1,500 gp), a charred finger wearing an adamantine ring engraved with a small prayer to Moradin (1,500 gp), and a red crystal locket on a silver chain (500 gp). The locket contains 1,000 gp worth of *residuum*.

**Tactics:** The chimeras charge and use *ram's gore* to knock enemies into the lava pit (area 19B) or lava pool (area 19D), and they're patient enough to ready attacks to charge enemies within 1 square of the lava. Against enemies who are not close enough to be knocked into lava, the chimeras use *dragon breath* and *triple threat*.

| 2 Elder Chimeras | Level 18 Elite Brute |
|---|---|
| Large natural magical beast | XP 4,000 each |
| **HP** 426; **Bloodied** 213 | **Initiative** +13 |
| **AC** 30, **Fortitude** 31, **Reflex** 28, **Will** 28 | **Perception** +16 |
| **Speed** 6, fly 12 | Darkvision |
| **Resist** 15 fire | |
| **Saving Throws** +2; **Action Points** 1 | |
| **Traits** | |
| **All-Around Vision** | |
| Enemies can't gain combat advantage by flanking the chimera. | |
| **Standard Actions** | |
| ⊕ **Dragon's Bite** (fire) ✦ **At-Will** | |
| *Attack:* Melee 2 (one creature); +23 vs. AC | |
| *Hit:* 2d12 + 7 damage, and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends). | |
| ⊕ **Lion's Bite** ✦ **At-Will** | |
| *Attack:* Melee 1 (one creature); +23 vs. AC | |
| *Hit:* 2d8 + 16 damage. | |
| ⊕ **Ram's Gore** ✦ **At-Will** | |
| *Attack:* Melee 1 (one creature); +23 vs. AC | |
| *Hit:* 2d10 + 13 damage, and the target falls prone. If the chimera charged, it also pushes the target up to 3 squares. | |
| ⸸ **Triple Threat** ✦ **At-Will** | |
| *Effect:* The chimera uses *dragon's bite, lion's bite,* and *ram's gore.* | |
| ✧ **Dragon Breath** (fire) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⚅ | |
| *Attack:* Close blast 5 (creatures in the blast); +19 vs. Reflex | |
| *Hit:* 2d10 + 16 fire damage, and ongoing 10 fire damage (save ends). | |
| **Triggered Actions** | |
| ✧ **Bloodied Breath** ✦ **Encounter** | |
| *Trigger:* The chimera is first bloodied. | |
| *Effect (Immediate Reaction): Dragon breath* recharges, and the chimera uses it. | |
| **Str** 25 (+16) **Dex** 18 (+13) **Wis** 14 (+11) | |
| **Con** 23 (+15) **Int** 5 (+6) **Cha** 18 (+13) | |
| **Alignment** unaligned **Languages** Common, Draconic | |

## Development

The battle roars of the chimeras are loud enough for creatures in area 18 to hear. Those creatures do not investigate but also cannot be surprised.

# 20. Lava Caves

**Combat Encounter Level 18 (10,400 XP)**

These lava-filled caves lie below the prison (area 13). The giants keep their worst prisoners here before feeding them to the red dragon (area 17) or the chimeras (area 19).

**Light:** Bright light (lava).

**Monsters:** 3 fire giant flameskulls, 2 fire bat swarms.

**Other Creatures:** Keak the gnome scout.

**When the characters see area 20A, read:**

*Lava fills the bottom of this one-hundred-foot-high cavern, casting a hellish glow upon the black basalt walls. High overhead, a wide bridge spans the cavern, and dangling from the bridge are four iron cages.*

**When the characters see area 20B, read:**

*Swarms of fire bats glide above the lava that fills this large cavern. Three small islands of rock connect basalt ledges along the north and east walls.*

These caves are filled with lava to a depth of 30 feet. Any creature that enters the lava or starts its turn there takes 15 fire damage and ongoing 15 fire damage (save ends). A creature can take this damage only once per turn.

**20A. Dangling Cages:** The surface of the lava is 5 feet below the northern ledge.

A black basalt bridge (area 13F) spans the cavern 70 feet above the lava. Four iron cages dangle from the bridge on 20-foot-long iron chains; the chains are attached to winches and cranes mounted atop the bridge. One contains a gnome prisoner named Keak. If Keak spots the heroes, he calls out for help and begs for release.

Each cage is cylindrical (5 feet in diameter and 7 feet tall) and made of crisscrossing iron bars, with a locked door on one side. The King's Torturer (area 13) has the keys. The locks can be picked with a DC 23 Thievery check. Every 8 hours, a character confined in a cage must succeed on a DC 23 Endurance check or take fire damage equal to his or her healing surge value.

The fire giant flameskulls guard the cages and attack anyone who tampers with them or attempts to free the prisoner. They also summon the fire bat swarms from area 20B, which enter through the narrow tunnels connecting the two caverns.

**20B. Lava-Filled Cavern:** Two swarms of fire bats fly above the lava in this cavern. Five feet above the surface of the lava are ledges set into the north and east walls. Between the ledges are islands of rock that characters can use to cross the cavern.

**Tactics:** The flameskulls target creatures with *flame rays* and use *telekinesis* to force enemies into the lava. The fire bats swarms use *swooping swarm* as often as possible.

| 3 Fire Giant Flameskulls | Level 19 Artillery |
|---|---|
| Small elemental animate (fire, undead) | XP 2,400 each |
| **HP** 138; **Bloodied** 69 | **Initiative** +15 |
| **AC** 33, **Fortitude** 29, **Reflex** 31, **Will** 32 | **Perception** +12 |
| **Speed** 0, fly 10 | |
| **Immune** disease, fire, poison; **Resist** 5 necrotic; **Vulnerable** 5 cold | |
| **Traits** | |
| **Illumination** | |
| The flameskull sheds bright light out to 5 squares. It can reduce its brightness to dim light out to 2 squares as a free action. | |
| **Regeneration** | |
| The flameskull regains 10 hit points whenever it starts its turn and has at least 1 hit point. Whenever the flameskull takes radiant damage, its regeneration does not function on its next turn. | |
| **Standard Actions** | |
| **Bite** (fire) ✦ **At-Will** | |
| *Attack:* Melee 1 (one creature); +24 vs. AC | |
| *Hit:* 3d8 + 14 fire damage. | |
| **Flame Ray** (fire) ✦ **At-Will** | |
| *Attack:* Ranged 20 (one creature); +24 vs. Reflex | |
| *Hit:* 3d6 + 16 fire damage. | |
| **Minor Actions** | |
| **Mage Hand** (conjuration) ✦ **At-Will** | |
| *Effect:* Ranged 5; the flameskull conjures a spectral, floating hand in an unoccupied square within range. The hand lasts until the end of the flameskull's next turn or until it uses this power again. While the hand persists, the flameskull can take the following actions. | |
| *Minor Action:* The hand picks up or manipulates an object of 20 pounds or less. It can hold one object at a time. | |
| *Move Action:* The hand moves up to 5 squares in any direction, carrying the object it holds. | |
| *Free Action:* The hand drops the object it is holding. | |
| *Sustain Minor:* The hand persists until the end of the flameskull's next turn. | |
| **Telekinesis** ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞ | |
| *Attack:* Ranged 10 (one creature); +24 vs. Fortitude | |
| *Hit:* The flameskull slides the target up to 4 squares. | |
| **Str** 10 (+9) **Dex** 22 (+15) **Wis** 17 (+12) | |
| **Con** 18 (+13) **Int** 15 (+11) **Cha** 25 (+16) | |
| **Alignment** evil **Languages** Common, Giant | |

| 2 Fire Bat Swarms | Level 17 Skirmisher |
|---|---|
| Large elemental beast (fire, swarm) | XP 1,600 each |
| **HP** 162; **Bloodied** 81 | **Initiative** +16 |
| **AC** 31, **Fortitude** 28, **Reflex** 30, **Will** 29 | **Perception** +18 |
| **Speed** 0, fly 8 | |
| **Immune** fire; **Resist** half damage from melee and ranged attacks; **Vulnerable** 10 to close and area attacks | |
| **Traits** | |
| **Swarm Attack** (fire) ✦ **Aura** 1 | |
| Any enemy that ends its turn in the aura takes 10 fire damage. | |
| **Swarm** | |
| The swarm can occupy the same space as another creature, and an enemy can enter its space, which is difficult terrain. The swarm cannot be pulled, pushed, or slid by melee or ranged attacks. It can squeeze through any opening that is large enough for at least one of the creatures it comprises. | |
| **Standard Actions** | |
| **Fire Swarm** (fire) ✦ **At-Will** | |
| *Attack:* Melee 1 (one creature); +20 vs. Reflex | |
| *Hit:* 3d6 + 6 fire damage. | |
| **Swooping Swarm** (fire) ✦ **Recharge** when first bloodied | |
| *Effect:* The swarm shifts up to its speed. Each time the swarm enters an enemy's space for the first time during the move, it makes a *fire swarm* attack against that enemy. | |
| **Str** 10 (+8) **Dex** 23 (+14) **Wis** 20 (+13) | |
| **Con** 18 (+12) **Int** 2 (+4) **Cha** 7 (+6) | |
| **Alignment** unaligned **Languages** – | |

## Keak the Gnome

To make some money, Keak joined an adventuring party of elves and led them down into the Underdark to hunt drow. Unfortunately for him, he was scouting ahead when a tunnel collapse separated him from his elf comrades, and before he could reunite with them, drow captured him. Stripped of his gear, Keak became a slave. In this capacity, he accompanied Eclavdra and her drow to Snurre's Hall. His incessant whining did little to endear him to his captors, but rather than kill the gnome outright, the drow left Keak to slowly bake in this prison. Over the past few days, Keak has concluded that fighting drow isn't for him.

If the characters free Keak, he is grateful and imparts the following information:

- A priestess of Lolth named Eclavdra leads the drow in Snurre's Hall. She's also the matron of House Eilservs. Attending Eclavdra are a male drow consort (Virchiln), the captain of her house guard (Nalice), a pair of sycophantic underpriests (Raeme and Sziraz), and a spy who keeps an eye on Snurre (Taz'zt).
- Eclavdra and her fellow drow came from the subterranean city of Erelhei-Cinlu to help the giants conquer the surface realms. Without the drow's advice and behind-the-scenes maneuvering, the giant alliance would almost certainly collapse. They are the true power behind the throne.
- A pair of fire giant death knights loyal to Snurre guards the passage to Erelhei-Cinlu.
- Eclavdra has a secret agenda: She has learned about a temple in Snurre's Hall dedicated to an ancient force of evil called the Elder Elemental Eye. The drow priestess seeks to learn the temple's secrets.

The gnome is currently bloodied and has only three healing surges, so he appreciates any healing the party can provide. He also begs for leather armor and a few daggers (his statistics assume he receives this gear). Keak cares only about Keak, however. He might help the characters out of a tight spot, but the first chance he gets, the gnome slinks away and attempts to make good his escape without so much as a goodbye.

| **Keak, Gnome Scout** | **Level 17 Striker** |
|---|---|
| Small fey humanoid | |
| **HP** 108; **Bloodied** 54; **Healing Surges** 9 | **Initiative** +13 |
| **AC** 32, **Fortitude** 29, **Reflex** 32, **Will** 29 | **Perception** +16 |
| **Speed** 5 | Low-light vision |
| **Traits** | |
| **Cunning Step** | |
| Keak takes only half damage from attacks made against him during his turn. | |
| **Standard Actions** | |
| ⊕ **Dagger** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will** | |
| *Attack:* Melee 1 (one creature); +24 vs. AC | |
| *Hit:* 1d4 + 13 damage. | |
| ⊹ **Throw Dagger** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will** | |
| *Attack:* Ranged 5 (one creature); +24 vs. AC | |
| *Hit:* 1d4 + 13 damage. | |
| **Triggered Actions** | |
| **Cunning Tumbler** ✦ **At-Will** | |
| *Trigger:* Keak hits or misses with a melee attack or ranged attack on his turn. | |
| *Effect (Free Action):* Keak shifts up to 2 squares | |
| **Dual Daggers** ✦ **At-Will** (1/round) | |
| *Requirement:* Keak must be wielding two daggers. | |
| *Trigger:* Keak hits with *dagger* on his turn. | |
| *Effect (Free Action):* Keak uses *dagger* again. | |
| **Fade Away** (illusion) ✦ **Encounter** | |
| *Trigger:* Keak takes damage. | |
| *Effect (Immediate Reaction):* Keak turns invisible until he attacks or until the end of his next turn. | |
| **Power Strike** ✦ **3/Encounter** (1/round) | |
| *Trigger:* Keak hits with *dagger.* | |
| *Effect (No Action):* The target takes 2d4 extra damage. | |
| **Skills** Acrobatics +18, Dungeoneering +16, Stealth +20 | |
| **Str** 10 (+8) **Dex** 20 (+13) **Wis** 16 (+11) | |
| **Con** 16 (+11) **Int** 14 (+10) **Cha** 13 (+9) | |
| **Alignment** unaligned **Languages** Common, Elven | |
| **Equipment** leather armor, 4 daggers | |

# 21. Troll Caverns

**Combat Encounter Level 19 (12,600 XP)**

When Snurre established his hall here, he slew the trolls already in residence. The festering evil of the Elder Elemental Eye prevented their foul spirits from resting easy. They avoid the giants and the drow, as well as the lava and the dragon, so they're more or less trapped here.

**Perception DC 33:** The character senses an unwholesome presence in the area.

**Light:** None (except in area 21A, which the lava brightly illuminates).

**Monsters:** Grakh (fell troll wraith), 5 troll wraiths.

**When the characters see area 21D, read:**

*Stalagmites of mineral-encrusted black rock thrust up from the floor. In the middle of this cavern, the floor falls away into a roughly circular pit of unknown depth. Drifting about are several gangly, incorporeal creatures with hooked noses and burning eyes. They look like troll wraiths!*

The trolls take on their ghostly aspects when they notice the characters; then they attack. Grakh stays at the bottom of his pit until something falls in or until the first troll is bloodied, at which point he emerges.

**When Grakh appears, read:**

*An enormous spectral troll no less than twenty feet tall rises out of the pit to its full height, and it looses a terrible roar that fills the room with the smell of rot.*

The ceiling is 50 feet high in area 21D and 30 feet high elsewhere. Bones, most of them troll, litter the floor throughout these caves.

Ledges overlook areas 17A and 21D, and they require DC 15 Athletics checks to climb.

**21A. Stairs Up:** A rough-hewn staircase climbs 75 feet to area 16B. The drow traverse this staircase frequently, using it to go to the second level and the Temple of the Elder Elemental Eye (area 15). Evidence of their passage can be confirmed with a DC 23 Perception check.

Troll wraiths don't come near this stairway or the passages that lead to areas 22 and 23.

*Lava Pool:* A 15-foot-wide pool of lava illuminates the cave. Any creature that enters the lava or starts its turn there takes 15 fire damage and ongoing 15 fire damage (save ends). A creature can take this damage only once per turn.

**21B. Haunted Tunnels:** Until a battle starts here, a few troll wraiths might be wandering these tunnels.

**21C. Troll Cavern:** This cavern contains a forest of stalagmites and columns that are blocking terrain.

**21D. Grakh's Pit:** This 25-foot-diameter pit plunges 50 feet into a pile of bones, some of them belonging to a Huge troll. The shaft has abundant handholds and requires DC 15 Athletics checks to climb.

*Treasure:* Buried under Grakh's bones is a pair of *bracers of mighty striking* (or another level 22 common or uncommon magic item) and 250 pp in an unlocked wooden coffer.

**Tactics:** The wraiths are ravenous creatures that attack the characters on sight unless a drow or a fire giant accompanies the party. The trolls fear and shun such creatures, so they retreat in this case.

Grakh makes claw attacks against enemies he can easily reach. When he uses *rotting roar,* he drives foes into his pit.

| Fell Troll Wraith | Level 20 Elite Brute |
|---|---|
| Huge shadow humanoid (undead) | XP 5,600 |
| **HP** 472; **Bloodied** 236 | **Initiative** +15 |
| **AC** 32, **Fortitude** 34, **Reflex** 31, **Will** 30 | **Perception** +7 |
| **Speed** 0, fly 10 (hover); phasing | Darkvision |
| **Immune** disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic | |
| **Saving Throws** +2; **Action Points** 1 | |
| **Traits** | |
| **Insubstantial** | |
| The wraith takes half damage from all attacks, except those that deal force or fire damage. Whenever the wraith takes radiant damage, it loses this trait until the start of its next turn. | |
| **Regeneration** (healing) | |
| The wraith regains 15 hit points whenever it starts its turn and has at least 1 hit point. Whenever the wraith takes acid or fire damage, its regeneration does not function on its next turn. | |
| **Troll Wraith Healing** (healing) | |
| Whenever an attack that doesn't deal acid, fire, force, or radiant damage reduces the wraith to 0 hit points, the wraith is not destroyed and is instead removed from play until the start of its next turn. It then returns to play in a space within 10 squares of the space from which it was removed, and it returns with 20 hit points. | |
| **Standard Actions** | |
| ⊕ **Shadow Claw** (necrotic) ✦ **At-Will** | |
| *Attack:* Melee 3 (one creature); +23 vs. Reflex | |
| *Hit:* 4d10 + 14 necrotic damage, and the target falls prone. | |
| ⸸ **Double Attack** ✦ **At-Will** | |
| *Effect:* The wraith uses *shadow claw* twice. | |
| ✧ **Rotting Roar** (fear, necrotic) ✦ **Recharge** when first bloodied | |
| *Attack:* Close blast 3 (creatures in the blast); +23 vs. Fortitude | |
| *Hit:* 6d12 + 14 necrotic damage, and the wraith pushes the target up to 4 squares. | |
| **Str** 18 (+14) **Dex** 20 (+15) **Wis** 5 (+7) | |
| **Con** 26 (+18) **Int** 7 (+8) **Cha** 19 (+14) | |
| **Alignment** chaotic evil **Languages** Giant | |

| 5 Troll Wraiths | Level 16 Brute |
|---|---|
| Large shadow humanoid (undead) | XP 1,400 each |
| **HP** 194; **Bloodied** 97 | **Initiative** +13 |
| **AC** 28, **Fortitude** 30, **Reflex** 28, **Will** 26 | **Perception** +12 |
| **Speed** 0, fly 8 (hover); phasing | Darkvision |
| **Immune** disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic | |
| **Traits** | |
| **Insubstantial** | |
| The wraith takes half damage from all attacks, except those that deal force or fire damage. Whenever the wraith takes radiant damage, it loses this trait until the start of its next turn. | |
| **Regeneration** (healing) | |
| The wraith regains 10 hit points whenever it starts its turn and has at least 1 hit point. Whenever the wraith takes acid or fire damage, its regeneration does not function on its next turn. | |
| **Troll Wraith Healing** (healing) | |
| Whenever an attack that doesn't deal acid, fire, force, or radiant damage reduces the wraith to 0 hit points, the wraith is not destroyed and is instead removed from play until the start of its next turn. It then returns to play in a space within 10 squares of the space from which it was removed, and it returns with 15 hit points. | |
| **Standard Actions** | |
| ⊕ **Shadow Claw** (necrotic) ✦ **At-Will** | |
| *Attack:* Melee 2 (one creature); +19 vs. Reflex | |
| *Hit:* 3d10 + 14 necrotic damage. If the attack bloodies the target, the wraith uses *shadow claw* against it again. | |
| **Str** 16 (+11) **Dex** 20 (+13) **Wis** 8 (+7) | |
| **Con** 24 (+15) **Int** 5 (+5) **Cha** 16 (+11) | |
| **Alignment** chaotic evil **Languages** Giant | |

## Development

Destroyed wraiths reform after 1d4 days unless the troll bones here are collected and burned. A character who has training in Religion and witnesses the wraiths' return might deduce this fact with a successful DC 25 Religion check.

# 22. Crystal Idol of Imix

**Combat Encounter Level 19 (12,200 XP)**

Years ago, the fire giants widened this cavern and, in so doing, unearthed a natural crystal formation that resembles a 20-foot-tall orange flame. Olostro, a giant with a keen interest in the Elemental Chaos, confirmed that the crystal was an idol of the Fire Lord Imix. He began to worship the idol and learned how to tap into its power. Although Snurre shows little regard for the discovery, other giants visit the idol from time to time, hoping to gain Imix's favor before setting off on raids or hunting expeditions.

The creatures in this area cannot be surprised if the sound of combat in area 17 alerted them.

**Light:** Bright light (crystal idol of Imix and roiling curtain of flame).

**Monsters:** Olostro (fire giant priest of Imix), 2 fire giants, 6 drow skulkers.

**Trap:** Crystal idol of Imix.

**If the characters approach area 12A from the south, read:**

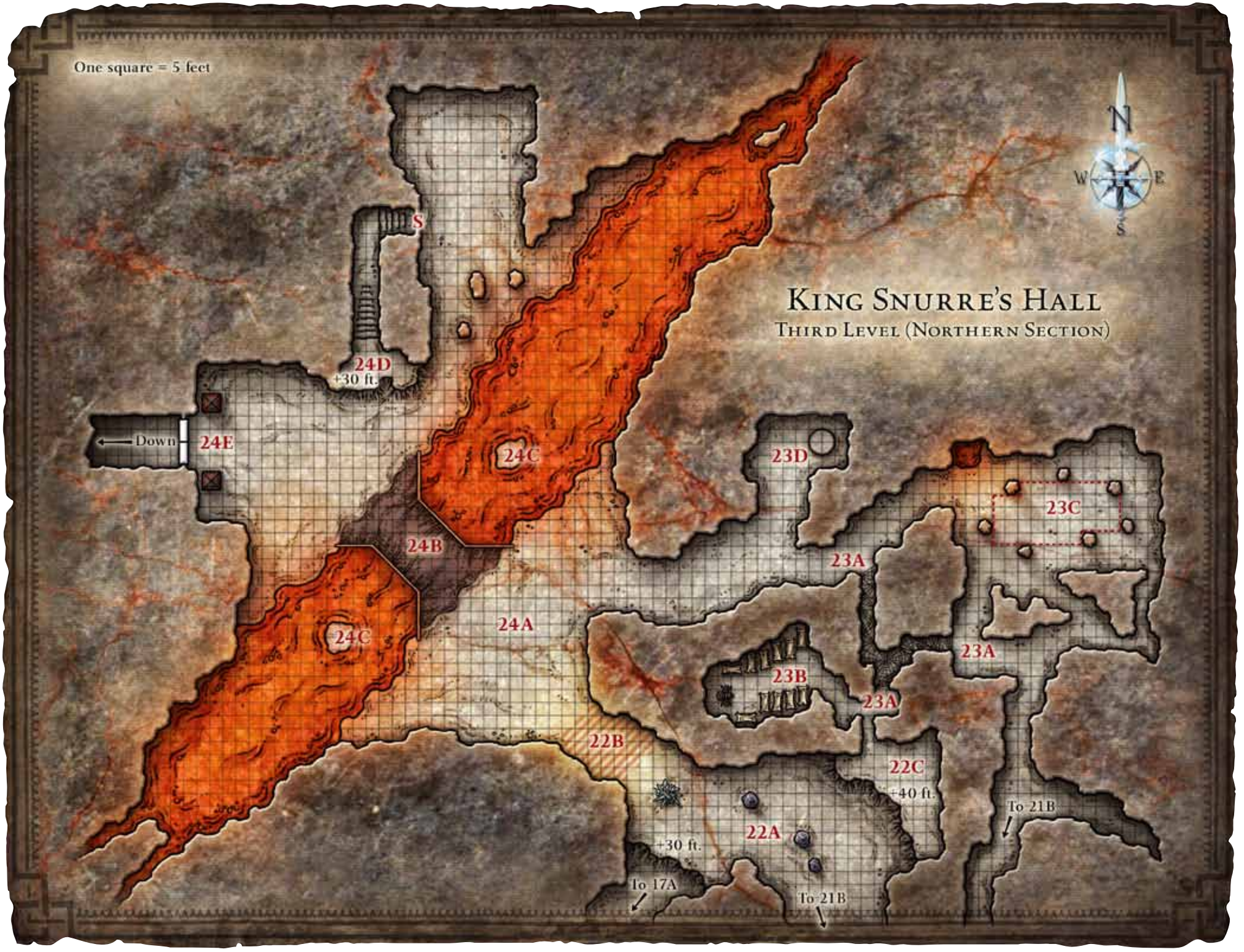
*This fifty-foot-high elongated basalt cavern shows signs of having been hewn in places. A few black stalactites jut from the floor, and a forty-foot-tall ledge clings to the eastern wall. To the west stands a twenty-foot-tall orange crystal formation that resembles a giant flame. A roiling curtain of fire blocks the tunnel beyond it.*

**Perception DC 33 (area 12A):** *Drow lurk on the eastern ledge.*

**If the characters catch the giants by surprise, add:**

*A fire giant in purple dragonhide robes kneels before the crystal flame while two other giants stand guard.*

The ceiling is 50 feet high in area 22A, 30 feet high in area 22B, and 10 feet high in area 22C. The ledges require DC 15 Athletics checks to climb.


One square = 5 feet
N
W
E
S
King Snurre's Hall
Third Level (Northern Section)
S
24D
+30 ft.
Down
24E
24C
24B
24C
24A
23D
23C
23A
23A
23B
23A
22B
22C
+40 ft.
To 21B
22A
+30 ft.
To 17A
To 21B

**22A. Cavern of the Crystal Idol:** Two fire giants watch the south tunnels that lead to this cavern, making it difficult for characters to approach unseen.

The 20-foot-tall crystal idol stands in the northwest corner of this cavern, directly in front of a passageway filled with raging fire (area 22B). Kneeling before the idol is Olostro, the fire giant acolyte of Imix.

Three 10-foot-high stalagmites rise from the cavern floor. They are blocking terrain.

**22B. Curtain of Flame:** A 20-foot-thick wall of fire completely fills this 30-foot-high tunnel from floor to ceiling. The only way to bring down the wall is to destroy the crystal idol of Imix. The curtain blocks line of sight but not line of effect. A creature that enters the curtain or starts its turn there takes 30 fire damage. A creature can take this damage only once per turn. If the crystal idol is destroyed, the curtain vanishes, allowing safe passage to area 24 beyond.

**22C. High Ledge:** This 40-foot-high ledge overlooks area 22A, and drow skulkers guard it.

**Tactics:** Olostro targets distant enemies with *curse of Imix*. When surrounded by close enemies and a few allies, he uses *evocation of Imix*. If an enemy comes within 10 squares of the crystal idol, Olostro touches the idol and activates it with a minor action. If enemies are detected in the passage south of the idol, Olostro can stand on the ledge overlooking the tunnel and use the idol to trap an enemy who is attempting to scale the ledge.

The fire giants watch the southern passageways, but once enemies get inside the cavern proper, the giants use their greatswords to keep enemies away from Olostro and the crystal idol.

The drow skulkers keep their distance, picking off enemies with poisoned crossbow bolts. They remain atop the eastern ledge and do not flee.

**Fire Giant Priest of Imix** **Level 20 Controller (Leader)**
Large elemental humanoid (fire, giant) XP 2,800

**HP** 190; **Bloodied** 95 **Initiative** +10
**AC** 34, **Fortitude** 33, **Reflex** 30, **Will** 31 **Perception** +15
**Speed** 7
**Resist** 20 fire

**Traits**

**Withering Flames** ✦ **Aura** 3
Enemies in the aura do not benefit from fire immunity or fire resistance.

**Standard Actions**

**Flaming Mace** (fire, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 2 (one creature); +25 vs. AC
*Hit:* 2d10 + 17 fire damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).

**Curse of Imix** (fire) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Ranged 5 (one creature); +23 vs. Fortitude
*Hit:* 2d12 + 6 fire damage, and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends). While taking this ongoing fire damage, the target has an aura 2 that deals 5 fire damage to any creature that enters the aura or starts its turn there. A creature can take the aura's damage only once per turn.

**Evocation of Imix** (fire) ✦ **Encounter**
*Attack:* Close burst 3 (enemies in the burst); +23 vs. Reflex
*Hit:* 3d10 + 6 fire damage, and the giant slides the target up to 3 squares.
*Effect:* Each ally in the burst gains a +5 bonus to damage rolls until the end of the giant's next turn.

**Skills** Arcana +18, Endurance +21
**Str** 23 (+16) **Dex** 11 (+10) **Wis** 10 (+10)
**Con** 22 (+16) **Int** 16 (+13) **Cha** 18 (+14)
**Alignment** evil **Languages** Giant, Primordial
**Equipment** robe, mace

**2 Fire Giants** **Level 18 Soldier**
Large elemental humanoid (fire, giant) XP 2,000 each

**HP** 174; **Bloodied** 87 **Initiative** +11
**AC** 34, **Fortitude** 34, **Reflex** 28, **Will** 28 **Perception** +14
**Speed** 8
**Resist** 15 fire

**Standard Actions**

**Searing Greatsword** (fire, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 2 (one creature); +23 vs. AC
*Hit:* 2d12 + 13 fire damage.
*Effect:* The giant marks the target until the end of the giant's next turn.

**Sweeping Sword** (fire, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Close blast 2 (enemies in the blast); +23 vs. AC
*Hit:* 2d12 + 13 fire damage.
*Effect:* The giant marks the target until the end of the giant's next turn.

**Str** 23 (+15) **Dex** 11 (+9) **Wis** 10 (+9)
**Con** 22 (+15) **Int** 10 (+9) **Cha** 11 (+9)
**Alignment** evil **Languages** Giant
**Equipment** chainmail, greatsword

| 6 Drow Skulkers | Level 18 Minion Skirmisher |
|---|---|
| Medium fey humanoid | XP 500 each |
| **HP** 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. | **Initiative** +16 |
| **AC** 32, **Fortitude** 29, **Reflex** 31, **Will** 30 | **Perception** +15 |
| **Speed** 7 | Darkvision |
| **Traits** | |
| **Personal Darkness** | |
| The drow has total concealment while moving. | |
| **Standard Actions** | |
| ⊕ **Short Sword** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will** | |
| *Attack:* Melee 1 (one creature); +23 vs. AC | |
| *Hit:* 13 damage. | |
| ➢ **Hand Crossbow** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will** | |
| *Attack:* Ranged 10 (one creature); +23 vs. AC | |
| *Hit:* 13 damage, and the target is slowed (save ends). | |
| *First Failed Saving Throw:* The target is also weakened (save ends both). | |
| *Second Failed Saving Throw:* The target instead falls unconscious until the end of the encounter. | |
| **Minor Actions** | |
| ➢ **Darkfire** ✦ **Encounter** | |
| *Attack:* Ranged 10 (one creature); +21 vs. Reflex | |
| *Hit:* The target grants combat advantage and cannot benefit from invisibility or concealment until the end of the drow's next turn. | |
| **Skills** Stealth +19 | |
| **Str** 15 (+11) **Dex** 20 (+14) **Wis** 13 (+10) | |
| **Con** 11 (+9) **Int** 15 (+11) **Cha** 16 (+12) | |
| **Alignment** evil **Languages** Abyssal, Common, Elven | |
| **Equipment** leather armor, short sword, hand crossbow, 20 bolts | |

## Crystal Idol of Imix

This 20-foot-tall, 10-foot-wide crystal formation resembles a giant flame. The idol traps Olostro's enemies inside its crystalline body and burns them to a crisp. Olostro must touch the crystal idol (a minor action) to activate its attack.

| Crystal Idol of Imix | Level 19 Trap |
|---|---|
| Object | XP 2,400 |
| **Detect** automatic | **Initiative** – |
| **HP** 250 | |
| **AC** 30, **Fortitude** 30, **Reflex** 5, **Will** – | |
| **Immune** all conditions, fire, forced movement, necrotic, ongoing damage, poison, psychic, radiant; **Vulnerable** 10 thunder | |
| **Identify** (Arcana) | |
| ✦ **DC 24:** The crystal is an idol of Fire Lord Imix, a powerful primordial. | |
| ✦ **DC 33 (Trained Only):** The crystal has the power to capture creatures inside it and burn them to a crisp. | |
| **Identify** (Perception) | |
| ✦ **DC 17:** The character sees that the crystal is rooted to the floor and immobile. | |
| ✦ **DC 24:** The character notices that the crystal is hollow and emanates ripples of heat. | |
| **Minor Actions** | |
| ➢ **Fiery Imprisonment** (fire, teleportation) ✦ **Recharge** when a captured creature escapes | |
| *Requirement:* A creature loyal to Imix must activate this power, and must be adjacent to the idol to do so. | |
| *Attack:* Ranged 10 (one creature the activating creature can see); +22 vs. Fortitude | |
| *Hit:* The target teleports inside the idol, is restrained, and loses any immunity or resistance to fire while in the idol—see "Countermeasures" below. Creatures have line of sight but no line of effect to the target, and vice versa. A target restrained inside the idol takes 30 fire damage at the end of its turn. If this damage kills the target, its body is reduced to ash. A target freed from the idol can teleport to a space within 10 squares of the idol. | |
| **Countermeasures** | |
| ✦ **Escape:** Endurance DC 24 (standard action) or 33 (minor action). *Success:* The trapped creature escapes the idol. *Failure (by 5 or more):* The trapped creature takes 15 fire damage. | |
| ✦ **Free a Prisoner:** While adjacent to the idol, (trained only) Arcana DC 24 (standard action) or 33 (minor action). *Success:* The character touches the idol and commands it to release the trapped creature. *Failure (by 5 or more):* The character and the trapped creature each take 15 fire damage. | |
| ✦ **Shatter Idol:** If the idol drops to 0 hit points, any creature trapped within is released. | |

# 23. Drow Warrens

**Combat Encounter Level 19 (12,800 XP)**

With King Snurre's permission, the drow have claimed these caves and tunnels as their demesne. A treacherous adventurer named Gleep Wurp is among them.

**Light:** Bright light in area 12B (torches), and none everywhere else.

**Monsters:** Gleep Wurp, Nalice (drow captain), Jiryzne (yochlol demon), 8 drow skulkers. If the drow skulkers from area 17 flee to this cavern, they are hiding in the shadows of area 12C. Place them along the outer walls of the cavern wherever seems appropriate.

**When the characters see area 23B, read:**

*This dead-end cave contains several folding cots made of spider silk woven over thin metal frames. An articulated metal spider with three-foot-long legs stands at the back of the cave, facing the entrance. Pacing around the cave, tapping a wand against one hand while muttering nervously to himself, is a rail-thin man in flashy wizard's robes.*

*"Begone!" he says with a start. "Begone, or face the wrath of the Eyebiter!"*

**When the characters see area 23C, read:**

*The ceiling of this cave is a nest of stalactites interspersed with dark pockets. Seven stalagmites encrusted with sparkling mineral deposits rise from the floor, forming an oval ring. Two female drow stand in the middle of the ring. One wears black chainmail and a helm with eight gems set into it, like spider eyes. She holds a hand crossbow in one hand and has a rapier fastened to her belt. The other drow wears a black, web-like gown and is unarmed.*

*The woman in the gown smiles at you and says, "You have come a long way to die."*

Gleep Wurp was an adventuring wizard who betrayed his companions to save his own skin. Snurre recently appointed the wizard as his emissary to Erelhei-Cinlu, a drow city in the Underdark. Gleep plans to travel to Erelhei-Cinlu and take up residence in House Eilservs shortly. In the meantime, Eclavdra has taken him as a consort, although she views him as nothing more than another instrument with which to manipulate and control the fire giant king.

Captain Nalice is a loyal member of the House of Eilservs, sworn to serve Eclavdra. She secretly believes that Eclavdra has strayed from the worship of Lolth and immersed herself too deeply in the "religion" of the Elder Elemental Eye. None of this affects Nalice's eagerness to crush enemies of the drow—in particular elves and eladrin, whom she despises. She also has no love for her mistress's newest consort, whom she treats like an imbecile despite his sharp intellect.

The yochlol is disguised as a drow named Jiryzne. Although she professes to support Eclavdra, her task is to spy on Eclavdra and eliminate the drow matron if it becomes clear that her faith in the Spider Queen has evaporated. Eclavdra, aware of Jiryzne's true allegiance and accustomed to betrayal, expects that Jiryzne will turn against her eventually.

The ceiling is 20 feet high in area 23A and 30 feet high in other areas.

**23A. Webbed Tunnels:** Glittering silver webs fill these narrow tunnels. The webs are magical and are difficult terrain to all creatures except demons, drow, and spiders. They are otherwise harmless and cannot be attacked. The webs are intended to discourage intruders from exploring area 23B.

**23B. Drow Quarters:** This cavern contains small cots that the drow can quickly disassemble and take with them. The cots have lightweight adamantine frames covered with spider silk. In addition to the cots, this cave contains a walking spider construct that doubles as a chest, wherein the drow keep their treasure. Gleep Wurp is here.

*Spider Chest:* This treasure chest is magical and resembles a 2-foot-diameter articulated adamantine spider with 3-foot-long adamantine legs. Resting atop it is a silver circlet with a prominent spider motif. The spider chest is a simple construct that follows any creature wearing the circlet, and only the wearer of the circlet can open the spider chest's lid (a Knock ritual or a DC 33 Thievery check also unlocks the chest). The spider chest has a speed of 6 and a climb speed of 6. The chest acts immediately after its controller and can take two move actions on its turn. Its statistics are as follows: AC 25; Fortitude 20, Reflex 20, Will —; immune disease, necrotic, poison, psychic, ongoing damage; hp 50; blindsight 5. The spider chest and its control circlet are worth 7,500 gp.

The chest holds a *+4 guardian's cape* (or another level 20 common or uncommon magic item), a golden torc studded with gems (7,500 gp), an amber flask (2,500 gp) wrapped in an exquisite embroidered shawl made of gossamer spider silk (2,500 gp), and two *potions of vitality* in skull-shaped glass flasks.

**23C. Drow Cavern:** This cave contains a ring of pillars as well as several drow hidden in niches and crannies in the ceiling. Below them lurks the drow captain Nalice and a yochlol demon in drow form. The pillars are blocking terrain. In addition, creatures inside the ring of pillars (as indicated by the dotted lines on the map) take a –2 penalty to all saving throws.

The northwest corner of the cavern holds a small, 5-foot-deep pool of drinkable water.

Nalice's helm is inlaid with eight spider-eye gems (4,500 gp each).

**23D. Teleportation Dais:** This cave is empty except for a 10-foot-diameter circular platform of purple stone set into the floor. This is the destination point for creatures that use the teleportation orb in area 15. Any creature that uses the orb teleports atop this platform, and as the platform activates, luminous golden symbols swim across its surface. The teleportation is one-way only. The dais also functions as a teleportation circle for rituals such as Linked Portal.

**Tactics:** Gleep Wurp doesn't want to fight alone, and he'd prefer not to fight at all. He's unwilling to put his life in the hands of adventurers, however, because he knows all too well how merciless they can be. If he can't reach his drow allies and the characters press him, he attacks. He uses *eyebite* every round as a minor action and uses *dimension hop* to keep a safe distance from melee attackers. Once he is bloodied, he starts looking for a way to combine his powers to escape the characters.

Nalice and Jiryzne try to draw enemies into the ring of stalagmites. Meanwhile, the drow skulkers hide in the dark crannies of the ceiling, waiting for their cue to rappel down spidersilk ropes and attack, dropping from the ceiling (a move action that counts as a charge) into positions that grant them combat advantage.

Nalice prefers to attack with her rapier and uses *trapping attack* to flank enemies. If Gleep Wurp comes to her seeking protection, she tries to hold enemies at bay so that the wizard can make ranged attacks without provoking opportunity attacks.

No one but Eclavdra knows that Jiryzne is a yochlol, and Jiryzne does not assume her true form until her deception is revealed, until all of her drow allies are dead, or until she is slain. While in drow form, Jiryzne uses *seductive glare* each round.

**Gleep Wurp, the Eyebiter** **Level 19 Elite Artillery**
Medium natural humanoid, human XP 4,800

**HP** 276; **Bloodied** 138 **Initiative** +11
**AC** 33, **Fortitude** 30, **Reflex** 31, **Will** 30 **Perception** +10
**Speed** 6
**Saving Throws** +2; **Action Points** 1

**Standard Actions**

**Dagger** (force, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 1 (one creature); +24 vs. AC
*Hit:* 3d4 + 9 damage plus 10 force damage.

**Acid Bolt** (acid, implement) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Ranged 20 (one creature); +24 vs. Reflex
*Hit:* 2d8 + 8 acid damage, and ongoing 10 acid damage (save ends).

**Lightning Web** (implement, lightning) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞
*Attack:* Area burst 1 within 20 (creatures in the burst); +24 vs. Reflex
*Hit:* 4d6 + 14 lightning damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).

**Move Actions**

**Dimension Hop** (teleportation) ✦ **Recharge** when Gleep spends an action point
*Effect:* Gleep teleports up to 5 squares.

**Minor Actions**

**Eyebite** (charm, implement, psychic) ✦ **At-Will**
*Special:* This attack does not provoke opportunity attacks.
*Attack:* Ranged 10 (one creature); +24 vs. Will
*Hit:* 3d8 + 14 psychic damage, and Gleep is invisible to the target until the start of Gleep's next turn.

**Skills** Arcana +19, Diplomacy +18, History +19
**Str** 10 (+9) **Dex** 15 (+11) **Wis** 12 (+10)
**Con** 18 (+13) **Int** 21 (+14) **Cha** 18 (+13)
**Alignment** evil **Languages** Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Elven, Giant
**Equipment** robes, dagger, wand, *potion of recovery*

**Drow Captain** **Level 19 Soldier (Leader)**
Medium fey humanoid XP 2,400

**HP** 174; **Bloodied** 87 **Initiative** +17
**AC** 35, **Fortitude** 30, **Reflex** 31, **Will** 32 **Perception** +12
**Speed** 7 Darkvision

**Traits**

**Ensnaring Venom** (poison) ✦ **Aura** 1
An unmarked slowed enemy that willingly leaves the aura takes 15 poison damage.

**Standard Actions**

**Rapier** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 1 (one creature); +24 vs. AC
*Hit:* 3d8 + 14 damage, and the target is slowed until the end of the drow's next turn.

**Trapping Attack** ✦ **At-Will**
*Effect:* Melee 1 (one creature); an ally adjacent to the target or the drow can shift 1 square as a free action. The drow then uses *rapier* against the target.

**Hand Crossbow** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Ranged 10 (one creature); +24 vs. AC
*Hit:* 2d6 + 10 damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).
*First Failed Saving Throw:* The target is also weakened (save ends both).
*Second Failed Saving Throw:* The target instead falls unconscious until the end of the encounter.

**Minor Actions**

**Darkfire** ✦ **Encounter**
*Attack:* Ranged 10 (one creature); +22 vs. Reflex
*Hit:* The target grants combat advantage and cannot benefit from invisibility or concealment until the end of the drow's next turn.

**Skills** Intimidate +21, Stealth +20
**Str** 20 (+14) **Dex** 22 (+15) **Wis** 16 (+12)
**Con** 14 (+11) **Int** 16 (+12) **Cha** 24 (+16)
**Alignment** evil **Languages** Abyssal, Common, Elven, Giant
**Equipment** chainmail, rapier, hand crossbow, 20 bolts

| Yochlol Demon | Level 17 Controller |
|---|---|
| Medium elemental humanoid (demon, shapechanger) | XP 1,600 |
| **HP** 158; **Bloodied** 79 | **Initiative** +14 |
| **AC** 31, **Fortitude** 27, **Reflex** 29, **Will** 30 | **Perception** +18 |
| **Speed** 6, climb 8 (spider climb) | Darkvision |
| **Resist** 10 poison | |

**Standard Actions**

**Spider Touch** (poison) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 1, or melee 2 in demon form (one creature); +20 vs. Reflex
*Hit:* 3d8 + 12 poison damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).

**Spider Bolt** (poison) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Ranged 10 (one creature); +20 vs. Reflex
*Hit:* 3d8 + 12 poison damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).

**Flurry** ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⚅
*Effect:* The yochlol makes two basic attacks.

**Maddening Web** (psychic) ✦ **Recharge** when first bloodied
*Attack:* Area burst 2 within 20 (enemies in the burst); +20 vs. Fortitude
*Hit:* Ongoing 15 psychic damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends both).

**Minor Actions**

**Change Shape** (polymorph) ✦ **At-Will**
*Effect:* The yochlol alters its physical form to appear as a female drow until it uses *change shape* again or until it drops to 0 hit points. To assume a specific individual's form, the yochlol must have seen that individual. Other creatures can make a DC 36 Insight check to discern that the form is a disguise.

**Cruel Command** (charm, psychic) ✦ **At-Will** (1/round)
*Attack:* Ranged 10 (one slowed creature); +20 vs. Will
*Hit:* The target is dazed (save ends).
*First Failed Saving Throw:* The target is instead stunned (save ends).
*Second Failed Saving Throw:* The target is instead dominated (save ends).

**Skills** Bluff +20, Intimidate +20, Stealth +19

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Str** 18 (+12) | **Dex** 23 (+14) | **Wis** 21 (+13) |
| **Con** 14 (+10) | **Int** 19 (+12) | **Cha** 24 (+15) |

**Alignment** chaotic evil **Languages** Abyssal, Common, Elven

| 8 Drow Skulkers | Level 18 Minion Skirmisher |
|---|---|
| Medium fey humanoid | XP 500 each |
| **HP** 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. | **Initiative** +16 |
| **AC** 32, **Fortitude** 29, **Reflex** 31, **Will** 30 | **Perception** +15 |
| **Speed** 7 | Darkvision |

**Traits**

**Personal Darkness**
The drow has total concealment while moving.

**Standard Actions**

**Short Sword** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 1 (one creature); +23 vs. AC
*Hit:* 13 damage.

**Hand Crossbow** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Ranged 10 (one creature); +23 vs. AC
*Hit:* 13 damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).
*First Failed Saving Throw:* The target is also weakened (save ends both).
*Second Failed Saving Throw:* The target instead falls unconscious until the end of the encounter.

**Minor Actions**

**Darkfire** ✦ **Encounter**
*Attack:* Ranged 10 (one creature); +21 vs. Reflex
*Hit:* The target grants combat advantage and cannot benefit from invisibility or concealment until the end of the drow's next turn.

**Skills** Stealth +19

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Str** 15 (+11) | **Dex** 20 (+14) | **Wis** 13 (+10) |
| **Con** 11 (+9) | **Int** 15 (+11) | **Cha** 16 (+12) |

**Alignment** evil **Languages** Abyssal, Common, Elven
**Equipment** leather armor, short sword, hand crossbow, 20 bolts

## 24. A Fiery End

**Combat Encounter Level 21 (16,400 XP) plus trap (16,800 XP)**

Eclavdra makes her final stand here, in a vast cavern bisected by a river of lava. By confronting her, the characters complete a minor quest (see "Quests," page 2). If the drow high priestess was killed earlier in the adventure, remove her from this encounter.

**Light:** Bright light (lava river).

**Monsters:** Eclavdra, 2 fire giant death knights, 2 salamander whips.

**Traps:** 2 exploding obelisks (which can release 2 rockfire guardians).

**When the characters see the area, read:**

*The wide tunnel spills into a vast cavern, its seventy-five-foot-high ceiling a nest of stalactites. A river of molten lava bisects the cavern, flowing slowly toward the north. Rising up out of the lava are two small islands of black basalt with fiery, serpentine creatures coiled upon them. In the middle of the cavern, a wide bridge of black glass arches over the river. The bridge is crafted to resemble a glittering black web. Standing shoulder-to-shoulder on the bridge are two skeletal giants clad in plate armor and armed with blackened greatswords.*

*A thirty-foot-high ledge overlooks the cavern on the far side of the bridge. To the right of the ledge, flush with the floor, stands a pair of huge black doors flanked by glowing obelisks.*

A 5-foot-deep ledge on either side contains the lava river. Any creature that enters the lava or starts its turn there takes 15 fire damage and ongoing 15 fire damage (save ends). A creature can take this damage only once per turn.

**24A. Southeast Shore:** Characters reach this rocky shore from area 22 or 23. Characters on this shore can see what is described above.

**24B. Glassweb Bridge:** This wide bridge is made of black glass and shaped like a giant web that arches over the lava river. Defending the bridge are Sulphus and Zematon, two fire giant death knights that attack characters as they try to cross the cavern.

The bridge is 10 feet above the lava's surface at its highest point. Its web-like design creates gaps in the bridge, none big enough to allow a creature to slip through. Medium size or smaller creatures—other than demons, drow, and spiders—treat the bridge as difficult terrain. (A successful DC 18 Acrobatics check made as part of any movement allows a character to ignore this terrain.)

**24C. Islands in the Fire:** These 10-foot-wide islands of black rock rise 5 feet above the surface of the lava and serve as perches for two salamander fire-whips. These serpentine creatures are allied with the drow and the fire giants.

**24D. Eclavdra's Ledge:** The drow priest Eclavdra commands her troops from this 30-foot-high ledge that overlooks the cavern. The ledge can be accessed by a secret door that requires a DC 25 Perception check to detect. Climbing up the wall to the ledge requires DC 20 Athletics checks.

**24E. The Black Doors:** Set into the basalt wall is a pair of enormous doors sculpted from black, opaque glass. Each door is 25 feet tall, 10 feet wide, and 1 foot thick, and together they block a miles-long passage that descends into the Underdark. Flanking the black doors are two 10-foot-tall, tapered obelisks made from solid blocks of brimstone, each covered with a web of cracks that pulse with magma-colored light. Etched into the floor between the two obelisks are the following words in Rellanic (Elven script):

*Know that you are leaving the hall of the fire giant king. Beyond these black doors, in the Underdark, lies the City of Erelhei-Cinlu and the Vault of the Drow. Descend into the depths at your own peril.*

Eclavdra knows the command word to open the black doors ("Charinida"), but she would rather die than give up the information. Only by dominating her or casting a Speak with Dead ritual on her corpse can the characters learn this secret. The doors shatter magnificently when destroyed (AC/Fortitude 15, Reflex 5; immune to fire, necrotic, poison, psychic, forced movement, all conditions, ongoing damage; vulnerable 10 thunder; hp 200). A Knock ritual with a successful DC 36 Arcana check can also open the doors, but this act sets off the obelisks.

**Tactics:** The creatures in this cavern use the river of lava to their advantage. Eclavdra uses *insidious offer* to dominate enemies and drive them into the lava. The fire giant death knights try to lure enemies into the lava with *balefire lure*. Salamander whips coil atop their islands and use the incredible reach of their whips to lash enemies and pull them into the lava.

Again, Eclavdra is not afraid to teleport or move to the floor and confront the characters directly. She prefers the safety of her perch.

Once freed from their obelisks (see "Exploding Obelisks" below), the rockfire dreadnoughts smash enemies with their flaming fists and hurl chunks of brimstone (ripped from their own bodies) at foes they cannot reach.

**2 Salamander Whips** — **Level 15 Soldier**
Large elemental humanoid (fire, reptile) — XP 1,200 each

**HP** 148; **Bloodied** 74 — **Initiative** +15
**AC** 31, **Fortitude** 27, **Reflex** 28, **Will** 26 — **Perception** +16
**Speed** 6
**Resist** 20 fire

Standard Actions

⊕ **Tail Lash** (fire) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 2 (one creature); +20 vs. AC
*Hit:* 2d10 + 12 fire damage, and the target falls prone.

**Fire Whip** (fire) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 10 (one creature); +18 vs. Reflex
*Hit:* 2d6 + 16 fire damage, and the salamander pulls the target up to 3 squares.

**Str** 17 (+10) **Dex** 23 (+13) **Wis** 18 (+11)
**Con** 20 (+12) **Int** 11 (+7) **Cha** 11 (+7)
**Alignment** evil **Languages** Primordial

**Eclavdra Eilservs** — **Level 20 Elite Soldier (Leader)**
Medium fey humanoid, drow — XP 5,600

**HP** 380; **Bloodied** 190 — **Initiative** +20
**AC** 36, **Fortitude** 31, **Reflex** 33, **Will** 32 — **Perception** +16
**Speed** 7 — Darkvision
**Saving Throws** +2; **Action Points** 1

Standard Actions

⊕ **Tentacle Rod** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 3 (one creature); +25 vs. AC
*Hit:* 3d8 + 15 damage, and the target is slowed (save ends). In addition, the target cannot benefit from immunity or resistance to poison until the end of the encounter.

**Emissary's Request** ✦ **At-Will**
*Effect:* Ranged 20 (one ally); the target can make an at-will attack or charge as a free action. A demon, drow, or spider ally gains a +2 power bonus to the attack roll.

**Double Attack** ✦ **At-Will**
*Effect:* Eclavdra uses *tentacle rod* twice, *emissary's request* twice, or each power once.

**Insidious Offer** (charm, psychic) ✦ **Recharge** when first bloodied
*Attack:* Ranged 10 (one creature); +23 vs. Will
*Hit:* The target chooses to become dominated (save ends) or take 40 psychic damage instead.

Minor Actions

**Entrancing Beauty** (charm, psychic) ✦ **At-Will** (1/round)
*Attack:* Close burst 5 (enemies in the burst); +23 vs. Will
*Hit:* Eclavdra pulls the target up to 2 squares.

Triggered Actions

**On Your Knees** ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞
*Trigger:* An enemy is hit by *tentacle rod.*
*Attack (No Action):* Melee 3 (the triggering enemy); +23 vs. Will
*Hit:* The target falls prone and cannot stand up (save ends).

**Blinking Escape** (teleportation) ✦ **At-Will**
*Trigger:* An area attack or a close attack hits Eclavdra.
*Effect (Immediate Reaction):* Eclavdra teleports up to 6 squares and gains partial concealment until the end of her next turn.

**Skills** Bluff +22, Insight +21, Intimidate +22, Religion +22
**Str** 16 (+13) **Dex** 26 (+18) **Wis** 22 (+16)
**Con** 22 (+16) **Int** 24 (+17) **Cha** 24 (+17)
**Alignment** chaotic evil **Languages** Abyssal, Common, Elven
**Equipment** robe, tentacle rod

**2 Fire Giant Death Knights** **Level 19 Elite Soldier**
Large elemental humanoid (fire, giant, undead) XP 4,800 each

**HP** 364; **Bloodied** 182 **Initiative** +14
**AC** 35, **Fortitude** 34, **Reflex** 29, **Will** 29 **Perception** +14
**Speed** 7 Darkvision
**Immune** disease, poison; **Resist** 15 fire, 10 necrotic; **Vulnerable** 10 radiant
**Saving Throws** +2; **Action Points** 1

**Traits**

**Unholy Defender** (fire, necrotic) ✦ **Aura** 2
While in the aura, an unmarked enemy that uses an attack power that fails to target a creature that has this aura active takes 15 fire and necrotic damage.

**Implacable**
If the giant would be marked, slowed, immobilized, dazed, or stunned, it can make a saving throw to end the effect, including an effect that a save cannot normally end.

**Standard Actions**

**Soulsword** (fire, necrotic, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 2 (one creature); +24 vs. AC
*Hit:* 2d10 + 16 fire and necrotic damage.

**Unholy Throwing Hammer** (fire, necrotic, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Ranged 10 (one creature); +24 vs. AC
*Hit:* 2d8 + 16 fire and necrotic damage, and the target falls prone.
*Effect:* The hammer returns to the giant's hand.

**Double Attack** ✦ **At-Will**
*Effect:* The giant makes two basic attacks.

**Balefire Lure** (fire, necrotic) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⚅
*Attack:* Close burst 3 (enemies in the burst); +22 vs. Will
*Hit:* The giant slides the target up to 3 squares into a space adjacent to the giant, and the target takes ongoing 20 fire and necrotic damage (save ends).
*Effect:* Undead allies in the burst gain a +5 power bonus to damage rolls until the end of the giant's next turn.

**Str** 24 (+16) **Dex** 16 (+12) **Wis** 10 (+9)
**Con** 22 (+15) **Int** 10 (+9) **Cha** 18 (+13)
**Alignment** evil **Languages** Common, Giant
**Equipment** plate armor, soulsword (greatsword), throwing hammer

## Rockfire Obelisks

Each of these tapered obelisks stands 10 feet tall and is carved from a solid block of brimstone. Covering the obelisk is a web of cracks that pulse with orange light. The obelisks explode if the Black Doors are destroyed or opened without the proper command word, or either obelisk is destroyed.

**2 Rockfire Obelisks** **Level 20 Trap**
Object XP 2,800 each

**Detect** automatic (the obelisks radiate heat) **Initiative** –
**HP** 180
**AC** 32, **Fortitude** 30, **Reflex** 5, **Will** –
**Immune** fire, necrotic, poison, psychic, radiant, forced movement, all conditions, ongoing damage; **Vulnerable** 10 cold, 10 thunder
**Identify** (Arcana; trained only)
✦ **DC 25:** The obelisk is attuned to a nearby object and will react if that object is destroyed.
✦ **DC 34:** The obelisk is a prison containing a powerful elemental.

**Triggered Actions**

**Rockfire Explosion** (fire, poison, zone) ✦ **At-Will**
*Trigger:* An object to which the obelisk is connected is opened or destroyed, or the obelisk is destroyed.
*Attack (Immediate Reaction):* Close burst 5 (creatures in the burst); +23 vs. Reflex
*Hit:* 4d10 + 9 fire and poison damage, and the target falls prone.
*Miss:* Half damage.
*Effect:* A rockfire guardian appears in the obelisk's former space.

**2 Rockfire Guardians** **Level 20 Elite Brute**
Large elemental magical beast (earth, fire) XP 5,600 each

**HP** 460; **Bloodied** 230 **Initiative** +16
**AC** 32, **Fortitude** 34, **Reflex** 32, **Will** 31 **Perception** +13
**Speed** 8
**Immune** disease, petrification, poison; **Resist** 20 fire; **Vulnerable** 5 thunder
**Saving Throws** +2; **Action Points** 1

**Traits**

**Chaotic Flame** ✦ **Aura** 2
Any creature that ends its turn in the aura loses any fire immunity or fire resistance until the end of its next turn.

**Standard Actions**

**Fiery Fist** (fire) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 2 (one creature); +25 vs. AC
*Hit:* 3d12 + 17 fire damage, or 4d12 + 17 fire damage to a prone target.

**Hurl Magma** (fire) ✦ **At-Will**
*Effect:* The guardian takes 15 damage.
*Attack:* Ranged 20 (one creature); +25 vs. AC
*Hit:* 5d12 + 15 fire damage, and the target falls prone.

**Minor Actions**

**Temblor** ✦ **Recharge** when first bloodied
*Attack:* Close burst 2 (enemies in the burst); +23 vs. Fortitude
*Hit:* The target falls prone.

**Str** 26 (+18) **Dex** 22 (+16) **Wis** 16 (+13)
**Con** 20 (+15) **Int** 8 (+9) **Cha** 7 (+8)
**Alignment** unaligned **Languages** Primordial

## Development

The horrors that lurk beyond the black doors are beyond the scope of this adventure series, including the Vault of the Drow and the drow city of Erelhei-Cinlu. For more information on these sinister subterranean locations, see pages 66–73 of the *Underdark*™ supplement.

# Concluding the Adventure

By the end of the adventure, the characters should realize that the drow are behind the alliance of the giant lords, and that they are using the giants to soften up the humans, elves, dwarves, and other surface-dwelling races. After the characters defeat King Snurre and Eclavdra, they can return to civilization to spend their hard-earned gold and collect on their various quests.

If the characters take the time to deliver Snurre's head to Krombaalt the storm giant lord, he rewards them with a wondrous vehicle called a *thundercloud tower*, which they can use as their new base of operations. The tower is attuned to the adventurers and no one else, which means only they can control its movement and use its attack power.

This item is above and beyond the normal treasure allotment for the adventure, but it comes with a maintenance cost. Each point of damage the tower takes reduces its value by 1,000 gp, and damage to the tower can be repaired at a cost of 1,000 gp per hit point.

**Thundercloud Tower** Level 25 Rare

*This fortified three-story tower floats atop a semisolid thundercloud.*

**Wondrous Item** 625,000 gp

**Properties**

- ✦ The tower is a flying vehicle (statistics appear below) with a magical control circle inscribed on the roof.
- ✦ Up to six humanoids can be attuned to the control circle.
- ✦ The control circle can also be used as a teleportation circle.

**Utility Power ✦ At-Will** (Move Action)

*Requirement:* You must be attuned to the tower and in the control circle.
*Effect:* You pilot the tower.

**Attack Power** (lightning, thunder) **✦ Encounter** (Standard Action)

*Requirement:* You must be attuned to the tower and in the control circle.
*Attack:* Ranged 20 (one, two, or three creatures); +28 vs. Reflex
*Hit:* 4d10 + 8 lightning and thunder damage.

**Thundercloud Tower**
Gargantuan vehicle

**HP** 625 **Space** 9 squares by 9 squares
**AC** 37, **Fortitude** 37, **Reflex** 5, **Will** – **Cost** 625,000 gp
**Immune** all conditions, cold, disease, forced movement, necrotic, ongoing damage, poison, psychic, radiant; **Resist** 15 all
**Speed** 0, fly 8 (hover)

**Pilot**

The pilot must stand in the control circle on the tower roof.

**Landing**

The tower can land in any space large enough to contain it (its two-dimensional space plus 50 feet of overhead clearance). While the tower is on the ground, the thundercloud beneath it vanishes and the tower loses its attack power.

**Load**

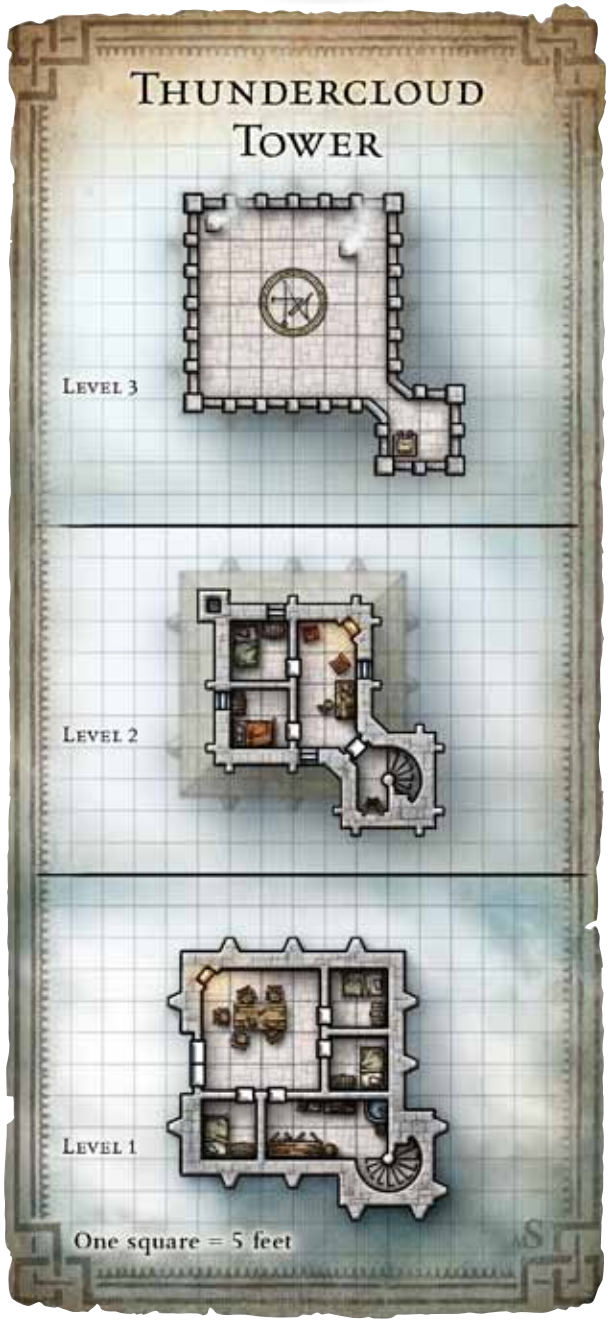
Ten Medium creatures; fifteen tons of cargo.

**Out of Control**

Without its pilot, the tower hovers in place and does not move.

**Magical Damage**

Each point of damage the tower takes reduces its value by 1,000 gp. Such damage can be repaired at a cost of 1,000 gp per hit point.



## AUTHOR'S ENDNOTE: UPDATING A CLASSIC

In reimagining "Hall of the Fire Giant King," I've inflicted some violence to the maps and encounters to make the adventure a fun and balanced gaming experience. I hope that DMs who have fond memories of the original read this latest incarnation and feel the same overwhelming desire to run the adventure as I felt back in 1980, when I read Gary Gygax's adventure for the first time.

—Christopher Perkins

### *Author Bio*

**Christopher Perkins** is the D&D Creative Manager at Wizards of the Coast LLC. He writes: "Ever since I started working on 4th Edition, I've been aching to update the classic 'G'-series of D&D adventures, breathing new life into Chief Nosnra, Jarl Grugnur, and King Snurre while adding some memorable villains and twists of my own." Chris hopes this reimagining of the series sends many adventurers to their graves while offering players a fun ride along the way!

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# Flame's Last Flicker

**An adventure for characters of levels 20–22**

*By Shawn Merwin*

*Illustrations by William O'Connor, Noah Bradley, Kieran Yanner, and Jim Nelson*

*Cartography by Kyle Hunter*

*The strange sensations coursing through Lady Glorianna Pike slowly ebbed into a comforting warm glow. Her experiences since her death had been fractured, washing over her in waves of pain and numbness, from raw ache to cold emptiness. She could feel the welcoming radiance of Bahamut drawing her inevitably toward her final end. All her sacrifices and victories in the name of the Platinum Dragon would be rewarded when she finally gazed on the countenance of her deity in his realm of Mertion on Celestia.*

*Then the enveloping glow turned suddenly into a searing heat. And as her soul was rent to pieces, Lady Glorianna realized that it is impossible to scream when you are already dead.*

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# Introduction

"Flame's Last Flicker" continues the story of the wily and ambitious red dragon known as Flame. His tale started in the adventure "Into the Fire" in the first issue of *Dungeon* magazine in 1986, continued in "Out of the Ashes" in *Dungeon 17*, and was reprised again in "Old Embers Never Die" in *Dungeon 100*. Having survived the meddling of a host of adventuring parties over the years, Flame now seeks revenge on his enemies, using his newly gained status as the servant of an entity from beyond the mortal world.

# Background

Flame lived an extraordinary life, even for a dragon. Through avarice, boundless ambition, fortuitous circumstances, and no small amount of innate magical power, Flame was able to recover from not one but three separate deaths at the hands of adventurers. By the time of his final destruction, Flame had drawn the attention of the goddess Tiamat, who made him one of her exalted—a trusted servant with designs on becoming an exarch. Since one of Flame's final incarnations before his demise was that of a skeletal dragon, the Dragon Queen decided to turn him into a unique undead creature: a dragon demilich.

Grateful for the chance to serve Tiamat, Flame wasted no time in proving his worth by hatching two brilliant and intermingled plans. Zehir, the god of darkness, shares the astral domain of Tytherion with Tiamat, and the two constantly battle for supremacy there. Bahamut is the natural enemy of Tiamat, and has been since both dragon gods were born from the death of Io. Flame thus created a scheme to siphon off much of Bahamut's power and pass it to Tiamat, hoping that Tiamat could use that stolen power to drive Zehir from Tytherion.

Flame has used his new abilities and a cadre of servants to coordinate attacks on highly placed mortal followers of Bahamut, killing them and stealing any relics or other items that had been dedicated to the Platinum Dragon. When the souls of these slain followers attempt to speed toward their final resting place in Celestia, Flame uses the magic of the stolen relics to draw those souls to Tiamat's domain in Tytherion instead. The resulting influx of power is being funneled into an army preparing to strike Zehir's forces when its strength is fully realized.

# Adventure Synopsis

The mission begins when the adventurers receive a message from Brother Plavius Huntro, a cleric of Bahamut who knows them by reputation. He informs them that a great servant of Bahamut has been murdered in the temple that he oversees in a small city not far away. To make matters worse, a relic holy to the Platinum Dragon was stolen from the victim, and the temple's reliquary was savaged and stripped of its contents. His message implores the heroes to come and investigate, and when they do so, they learn how dire and urgent the situation is.

Brother Plavius asks the heroes to travel to a nearby major city and report this attack. When the adventurers arrive, they learn that the high priest of the great Platinum Temple in that city was killed in a similar attack at almost the same time. Indeed, many reports have come to the great temple recently from across the land of the deaths of Bahamut's followers. Evidence suggests that not only were these people killed, their souls were hijacked on the way to their final resting place. It seems that some powerful force has declared war on the Platinum Dragon's followers.

The heroes learn that the souls of Bahamut's followers are being diverted to an area in the Astral Sea, and they travel there to investigate. One of Tiamat's dominion ships is in the area, and the adventurers must fight a dragon and its hired soldiers. Clues at the scene reveal that the souls are being diverted to one of the Scales, an archipelago of islands bordering Tytherion.

When the adventurers arrive at the island where the souls were taken, they find a portal being tended by lost souls that have pledged loyalty to Flame. Shortly thereafter, forces dedicated to Zehir invade the island, attempting to slay the adventurers.

After the battle, an old man taking the form of an avatar of Bahamut appears. He explains the truth behind Flame's plans: The dragon demilich is stealing the souls of Bahamut's followers. The old man also reveals that Flame, as a lich, cannot be defeated unless the adventurers first locate and destroy his phylactery. Adding to the problem, Flame has found a way to create multiple phylacteries and has hidden them in his own past, making them practically impossible to retrieve. But the old man knows how the adventurers can use an artifact that Flame has stolen to go back in time for a brief period, giving them the means to destroy the phylacteries.

The adventurers enter Flame's lair through the portal and obtain the artifact before the dragon lich is alerted to their intrusion. Using the artifact, the characters are transported back to each of three different times in Flame's past, enabling them to destroy the phylactery hidden in each of those time periods.

When the final phylactery is destroyed, the adventurers are returned to Flame's lair in the present, where they must destroy the demilich to put an end to his plots and release the souls he has captured.

## Setting Details

This adventure can be set in any civilized land with an organized religion that reveres Bahamut (or a similar deity). The first event can take place in any small city that has an established temple to Bahamut. The second event should take place in one of the most populous civilized areas in the region, where a large temple to Bahamut would be located. For example, in the Forgotten Realms® setting, the adventure could begin in Daerlun in Sembia or Marsember in Cormyr.

The Platinum Temple could be set in Waterdeep or Baldur's Gate.

The adventure uses material from *Manual of the Planes* and *The Plane Above: Secrets of the Astral Sea*. Adjustments can be made to match the cosmology of the world in which the adventure is set. For example, if Tiamat has her realm somewhere other than Tytherion, Flame's plan could involve the Dragon Queen fighting another cosmic power instead of Zehir.

### Time Bubbles

When the adventurers go back in time in search of Flame's hidden phylacteries, a time bubble is created that encompasses the area in which it appears. The characters can see the edges of the bubble, but to creatures in the encounter, it does not exist. If an adventurer moves outside the time bubble, he or she disappears from the encounter and is held in stasis until the bubble moves to the next time period. You can adjust the size and shape of the time bubble to change the difficulty of the time-travel encounters.

## Quests

The major quest of this adventure is the investigation of the deaths of Bahamut's faithful and the fate of their souls, culminating in the release of the captured souls of Lady Glorianna, Father Narthex, and Solinger Stowe. A major quest reward appropriate to the party's level should be given if this goal is achieved.

A minor quest can also be given for the final destruction of the dragon demilich Flame. This award should be given only if Flame is defeated and all his phylacteries have been destroyed.

## Treasure

The events of this adventure include no treasure. You should assign treasure as appropriate for your campaign, remembering that the characters cannot travel to other areas outside the specific events while they are time traveling.

## Extended Rests

This adventure is designed to allow the heroes to take short rests between each of the events, but assumes that the characters cannot take an extended rest. The threat of Flame's misuse of the stolen souls and relics should prompt the heroes to move forward without delay. If the adventurers decide to take an extended rest after Event 3 or Event 4, the final encounter with Flame should be increased in difficulty. With additional time to make use of the souls and relics, Flame can create more dragonborn chosen of Tiamat, and might have recruited additional creatures to his cause.

If the heroes are having a difficult time, you can adjust the rules governing the time-travel events, allowing the adventurers to gain the benefit of an extended rest instead of a short rest for one or more events. Suggestions have also been made in the encounters to help you adjust the difficulty level.

## Events

As the adventurers recover from their latest victory and enjoy their status as epic heroes, they receive a message from Brother Plavius Huntro, the cleric in charge of a temple dedicated to Bahamut in a small city. He requests their assistance in an urgent matter. When the adventurers answer his call, proceed to Event 1.

## Event 1: Death of One

**Roleplaying Encounter**

The temple of Bahamut is one of the largest and most lavishly decorated buildings in this small city. (Temples to Bahamut are rare, and they exemplify the Platinum Dragon's magnificence.) Brother Plavius, a human cleric of Bahamut, meets the adventurers.

**When the adventurers arrive, read:**

*Though Brother Plavius is young, his hair matches the silver-gray of the robes he wears. "Thank you for coming," he says. "I'll answer all your questions, but first, there's something you should see."*

*The priest leads you down a set of stairs into the temple's basement, where he uses three different keys to unlock a heavy door. "This is, or was, our reliquary," Brother Plavius says. "The storehouse of our most sacred treasures." With a grimace, he gestures for you to look inside.*

*The stone walls of this room were once lined with polished oaken shelves and cabinets. However, these fittings have been savaged, the items held there now stolen, or shattered and strewn across the floor. Amid the destruction lies the crumpled form of a human female in plate armor. Long raven hair spills from beneath a decorated helm. A dazed expression shows on her pallid face, but her open eyes are devoid of life.*

Brother Plavius provides the following information.

- The body is that of Lady Glorianna Pike. She is a paladin of Bahamut and the personal investigator of the high priest of Bahamut, Father Narthex. The high priest lives at the Platinum Temple in a distant, larger civilized city.
- Lady Glorianna was helping to investigate the suspicious deaths of twenty devout followers of Bahamut in the last two months. She arrived yesterday and was preparing to begin her work. The first few deaths seemed coincidental, since the original victims were elderly or in poor health. However, recent deaths have been more suspicious in nature. As with Lady Glorianna, no evidence has been left behind to hint at what caused the deaths.
- Most of the items in the room were minor pieces, including trinkets and small charms belonging to

some of Bahamut's most faithful servants. A few items stored here were magical—relics said to have been held or touched by the Platinum Dragon. Brother Plavius is certain that all those items are gone.

- After arriving, Lady Glorianna asked to spend time in the reliquary, so Brother Plavius escorted her there and watched her lock herself in. (The keys that Plavius gave her can be found beneath some debris.) People worshiping and working late at the temple heard the attack. When Brother Plavius arrived to investigate, the sounds of battle had ended but the door was still locked. Whatever had killed Lady Glorianna apparently vanished into thin air.
- Brother Plavius attempted to perform a ritual to speak with the departed soul of Lady Glorianna, but the ritual failed utterly. To him, it felt as though her spirit had been terribly and utterly eradicated.

When the adventurers examine the reliquary and Lady Glorianna's body, they can learn the following.

- A DC 26 Heal check reveals that Lady Glorianna's death is not from any natural causes or known trauma. Her body shows no evidence of any physical harm.
- A DC 19 Arcana check reveals that residual necromantic magic lingers in the body. A DC 26 Arcana check reveals faint traces of teleportation magic in the room. Some kind of planar travel was used here recently.
- Lady Glorianna still wears her armor, shield, and empty scabbard. There is no sign of her sword.
- A DC 26 History check or Religion check recalls tales of Lady Glorianna's exploits, and that her sword is called *Justice's Edge*. The blade is one of Bahamut's most holy and powerful artifacts.

## Moving Forward

The speed with which Flame has advanced his plots means that the characters must focus quickly on the task at hand. Brother Plavius asks them to travel to the Platinum Temple in the larger city to report the murder and check in with Father Narthex. He reveals that when he tried to perform a ritual to contact Father Narthex regarding Lady Glorianna's death, he received no response.

The adventurers presumably have the means to travel to the Platinum Temple quickly. Brother Plavius can provide the coordinates and the authority to use that temple's teleportation circle, or he can procure a Linked Portal ritual scroll for the characters from the temple's library.

# Event 2: Death of Many

**Roleplaying Encounter**

Father Narthex was the high priest in the Platinum Temple, the largest temple of Bahamut in the land. With his death, Mother Opaline has taken charge.

**When the adventurers arrive, read:**

*A stately priestess in silver-gray robes meets you on your arrival. "I am Mother Opaline," she says. "I am head of the temple now that Father Narthex has passed. Thank the Platinum Dragon you are here."*

Mother Opaline reveals that Father Narthex died at nearly the same time as Lady Glorianna. Moreover, she has begun to receive reports from across the land that powerful followers of Bahamut have been murdered and their relics stolen in attacks that took place nearly simultaneously.

Mother Opaline takes the adventurers to meet a witness to the attack on Father Narthex, a chambermaid named Syrriline. The maid is resting in a small meeting room, watched over by one of Mother Opaline's aides. Humorless and stoic at the best of times, Syrriline is in a dark mood after her brush with death. She shows little grief.

**When the adventurers meet Syrriline, read:**

*The tall, stately human female waiting for you appears grim and shaken. In response to Mother Opaline's request, she tells you what she saw.*

*"I opened the door to the father's chamber, bringing him his drink, and there hanging in the air was a skull the size of a horse's, except with glowing horns and shiny teeth as bright as diamonds. Bright lights burst out of the skull's eye sockets, striking the father. He stood for a moment as if he couldn't breathe. Then he collapsed.*

*"A few soldiers were with the skull, too, so I closed the door and ran to fetch the guards. When we got back, all was silent. The father was dead."*

The adventurers can ask Syrriline more questions, but she cannot give any other helpful information.

Mother Opaline lets the adventurers inspect the high priest's quarters and his corpse, which reveals the same information learned from Lady Glorianna's body. Necromantic magic was involved, and all attempts to contact or bring back the soul of the high priest are doomed to failure. Additionally, a number of relics were stolen from Father Narthex's chambers.

**Mother Opaline adds:**

*"Attempts to contact Bahamut and his divine servants have failed. Something worse than a battle against Bahamut's worldly holdings is in the offing. Some force meddles with his power across the planes."*

*Mother Opaline then asks her assistant to bring in Captain Horatio Sincaid. "Captain Horatio was once a sailor who traveled the wide seas. As a young man, he was caught up in a planar rift and dragged to the Astral Sea. As he drifted there, helpless and afraid, he claims to have gazed on the countenance of the Platinum Dragon in his true form. Since that time, Horatio has been touched with the*

*power to move back and forth between the world and the Astral Sea, and he undertakes missions for us there."*

*Captain Horatio is an elderly human male with a bald head, a long beard, and a stooped gait. His eyes shine with a platinum light as he tells you his story.*

*"Last night I was making the voyage along the golden strand betwixt the Land of the Dead and the realm of my master. Then I noticed that a number of souls, unusual to see, were sailing the strand. Curiosity overcame my sense, so I followed. Not long after I started down the strand, I saw it was entwined with a mote of dark blue crystal. I turned sail and fled, because a more unnatural sight I never saw. But them souls aren't reaching the master. That I know."*

A character who has training in Religion knows more regarding Horatio's tale. Souls that leave the mortal realm travel through the Shadowfell, after which some move on toward other planar resting places. Colored strands show the connections between these realms. The golden strand leads to the domain known as Celestia, where Bahamut's realm of Mertion is located. Souls traveling along a strand move more quickly than mortals traveling through the Astral Sea by normal means.

Mother Opaline asks the adventurers to seek the location in the Astral Sea where Horatio saw the blue crystal intercepting the strand. If the characters don't own an astral vessel or have access to other magic allowing them to enter and safely traverse the Astral Sea on their own, they can take passage on Captain Horatio's *astral skiff*, the *Rusty Bucket*.

### Fun with Time Travel

Since this adventure involves the heroes moving backward in time, you might add an element of fun by playing on the theme that something they do in the past could affect their present.

As the characters are preparing to travel to the Astral Sea, a young kobold named Iantli comes to the Platinum Temple. She asks for the heroes by name and claims that she has an important message for them. She says that her great-great-grandsire, Ivorpo, was a tribal chief in the mountains of the northern wilderness. He tasked his ancestors to deliver a parchment to the adventurers at this exact time and place. Though his kin thought him insane, on his deathbed the old kobold chieftain claimed that the tribe owed its power and status to the heroes. If the adventurers do not receive the message, it will doom the kobolds' fortunes forever.

Iantli gives the adventurers an old ivory scroll case containing a rolled-up piece of parchment. However, the parchment is devoid of writing. No matter what skills, powers, or rituals are used on it, the parchment remains an empty sheet of paper containing no magic.

The message on the parchment appears only if the adventurers rescue Ivorpo in Event 7 and have the presence of mind to tell the kobold where they will be to receive the message in the future. The message contains a clue that can help the adventurers deal with the trapdoor in Event 7.

## Event 3: Indigo Crystal

**Combat Encounter Level 22 (23,600 XP)**

Assuming the adventurers accept passage on the *Rusty Bucket* with Captain Horatio, he uses his innate magic to transport them and the vessel to the Astral Sea. He finds the golden strand leading toward Celestia and sets sail to follow it.

### Traveling the Astral Sea

For more information on traveling in the Astral Sea, consult *Manual of the Planes* and *The Plane Above*. The *astral skiff* the adventurers are riding has a standing room 2 squares wide by 6 squares long, and moves at 12 squares per round.

In the Astral Sea, creatures that have a swim speed or a fly speed can use those modes to move. Other creatures gain a fly speed of 2 (clumsy). The Astral Sea has no directional gravity, so falling is not possible. Creatures can move vertically as easily as horizontally.

**Perception DC 35:** As the adventurers approach the encounter location, an invisible *astral clipper* waits 20 squares from the crystal mote. Those making the Perception check notice that the astral mist around the clipper is slightly displaced.

**Light:** Bright ambient light throughout the Astral Sea.

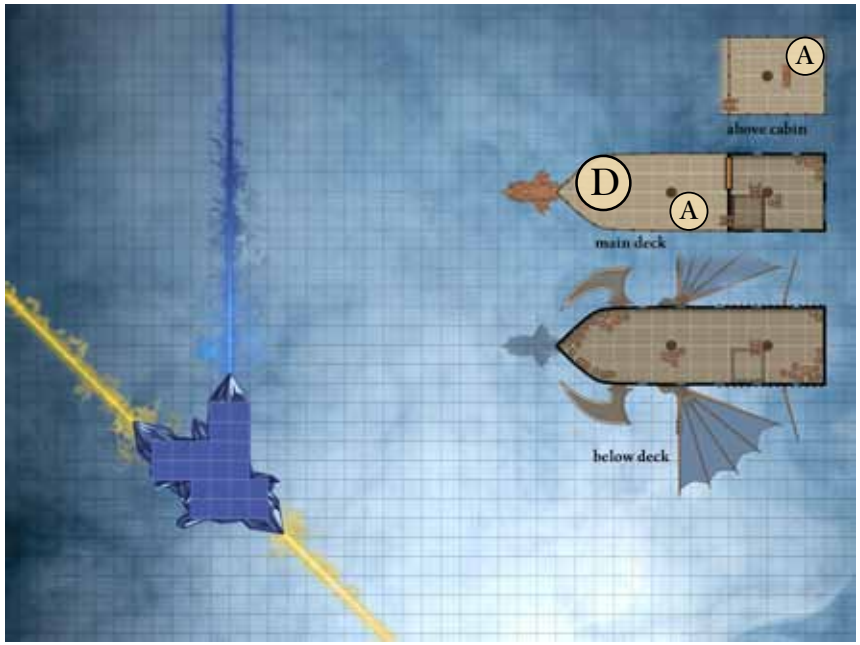
**Monsters:** Elder blue dragon (D), 2 angels of vengeance (A).

**When the skiff arrives, read:**

*The golden strand continues into the distance, and you see a glint of light where it touches an indigo-colored mote of crystal floating in the Astral Sea. The golden strand runs directly into the crystal and continues out the other side. A third strand, the same indigo color as the crystal island, breaks off in a different direction. Inside this indigo strand, a golden light shines weakly.*

**Arcana DC 26 or Religion DC 19:** *The indigo hue is typical of astral strands that lead to Tytherion, the astral dominion of Tiamat and Zehir.*

When the *Rusty Bucket* or any of the adventurers reach the crystal island, the monsters attack, rendering the other vessel and its occupants visible. In addition to the dragon and the angels, the enemy ship includes four humanoid crew members that operate the vessel but don't actively fight. Characters who were successful at the Perception check can act during the surprise round.




**Tactics:** The monsters order the humanoid crew of their *astral clipper* to close and attack, after which the creatures board the characters' vessel or fight alongside it. Mobility is the dragon's greatest weapon, and it soars above melee attackers while it uses its ranged and area powers. The angels are the dragon's personal bodyguards, and they do their best to lock down or slay those who attack the dragon.

*Ship Combat:* The *Rusty Bucket* and the *astral clipper* (named *Sweet Shock*) can take part in the combat if you wish. The statistics for an *astral skiff* appear in *Manual of the Planes*, page 159. The *astral clipper* can be found in *The Plane Above*, page 20.

Although a vessel normally needs a crew to keep it under control, Captain Horatio can sail the *Rusty Bucket* by himself. The captain doesn't join the fight as he focuses on piloting his ship. If the *Rusty Bucket* takes part in combat and is damaged beyond repair, the adventurers can take command of the *Sweet Shock* to continue the adventure.

## The Crystal Island

Flame created the crystal island to divert the souls of Bahamut's faithful from their final rest. When such souls arrive here, they feel the pull of the Bahamut relics that Flame has stolen. This diversion of souls is obvious to anyone trained in Arcana or Religion.

**Soul Danger:** At the start of each round in which any creature stands on the crystal island, roll a d20. On a 10 or higher, a soul passes through the crystal, dealing 15 necrotic and radiant damage to each creature on the island. The monsters here know the danger of touching the crystal and avoid doing so. A character who succeeds on a DC 35 Arcana check or Religion check (a minor action) recognizes the danger before coming into contact with the crystal.

**Shutdown:** Physical damage cannot disturb the crystal island or sever the strands. If the characters can accumulate three successes with DC 35 Arcana checks or Religion checks (each a standard action) in 1 round, they can turn off the flow of souls through the wrong strand for 24 hours. A character who fails one of these checks takes 30 necrotic and radiant damage.

## Conclusion

When the adventurers defeat the monsters, the humanoid crew of the *Sweet Shock* surrenders without a fight. They are slaves of Tiamat that were forced to crew the vessel and follow the blue dragon's orders.

**Elder Blue Dragon (D)** **Level 20 Solo Artillery**
Huge natural magical beast (dragon) XP 14,000

**HP** 756; **Bloodied** 378 **Initiative** +13
**AC** 34, **Fortitude** 33, **Reflex** 30, **Will** 30 **Perception** +18
**Speed** 10, fly 12 Darkvision
**Resist** 15 lightning
**Saving Throws** +5; **Action Points** 2

**Traits**

**Uncontained Lightning** (lightning) ✦ **Aura** 5
While the dragon is bloodied, any enemy that ends its turn in the aura takes 10 lightning damage.

**Action Recovery**
Whenever the dragon ends its turn, any dazing, stunning, or dominating effect on it ends.

**Instinctive Lightning**
On an initiative of 10 + its initiative check, the dragon can use a free action to fly up to its speed and use *lightning burst*. This movement does not provoke opportunity attacks. If the dragon cannot use a free action to make this attack due to a dominating or stunning effect, then that effect ends instead of the dragon making the attack.

**Standard Actions**

**Gore** (lightning) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 3 (one creature); +25 vs. AC.
*Hit:* 4d12 + 16 lightning damage.

**Claw** ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 3 (one or two creatures); +25 vs. AC. If the dragon targets only one creature, it can make this attack twice against that creature.
*Hit:* 4d8 + 13 damage.

**Lightning Burst** (lightning) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Area burst 2 within 20 (creatures in the burst); +25 vs. Reflex
*Hit:* 3d12 + 13 lightning damage.
*Miss:* Half damage.

**Breath Weapon** (lightning) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞
*Attack:* Close blast 20 (up to three creatures in the blast); +25 vs. Reflex.
*Hit:* 4d12 + 16 lightning damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).
*Miss:* Half damage.

**Thunderclap** (thunder) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞
*Attack:* Area burst 3 within 20 (creatures in the burst); +25 vs. Fortitude
*Hit:* 4d6 + 12 thunder damage, and the target is stunned until the end of the dragon's next turn.
*Miss:* Half damage, and the target is dazed until the end of the dragon's next turn.

**Triggered Actions**

**Wing Backblast** ✦ **At-Will**
*Trigger:* An enemy hits the dragon with a melee attack.
*Attack (Immediate Reaction):* Close burst 3 (enemies in the burst); +23 vs. Reflex
*Hit:* The target falls prone.
*Effect:* The dragon flies up to half its speed. This movement does not provoke opportunity attacks.

**Bloodied Breath** ✦ **Encounter**
*Trigger:* The dragon is first bloodied.
*Effect (Free Action): Breath weapon* recharges, and the dragon uses it.

**Skills** Athletics +22, Insight +18
**Str** 25 (+17) **Dex** 16 (+13) **Wis** 17 (+13)
**Con** 21 (+15) **Int** 15 (+12) **Cha** 16 (+13)
**Alignment** evil **Languages** Common, Draconic

**2 Angels of Vengeance (A)** **Level 19 Elite Brute**
Large immortal humanoid (angel) XP 4,800 each

**HP** 426; **Bloodied** 213 **Initiative** +13
**AC** 31, **Fortitude** 33, **Reflex** 29, **Will** 33 **Perception** +16
**Speed** 8, fly 12 (hover)
**Immune** fear; **Resist** 15 cold, 15 fire, 15 radiant
**Saving Throws** +2; **Action Points** 1

**Traits**

**Cloak of Vengeance** (cold, fire)
While the angel is not bloodied, attack rolls against it take a -2 penalty, and any creature that hits the angel with a melee attack takes 10 cold and fire damage.

**Standard Actions**

**Longsword** (cold, fire, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 2 (one creature); +24 vs. AC
*Hit:* 4d10 + 12 cold and fire damage.

**Double Attack** ✦ **At-Will**
*Effect:* The angel uses *longsword* twice.

**Minor Actions**

**Sign of Vengeance** ✦ **Encounter**
*Effect:* Ranged sight (one creature). Until the end of the encounter, the angel can teleport adjacent to the target as a move action.

**Triggered Actions**

**Coldfire Pillar Transformation** (cold, fire, polymorph) ✦ **Encounter**
*Trigger:* The angel is first bloodied.
*Effect (Free Action):* The angel becomes a 6-square-high pillar until the start of its next turn. While in this form, it is immune to all damage. When the effect ends, the angel makes the following attack.
*Attack:* Close burst 2 (enemies in the burst); +22 vs. Reflex
*Hit:* 2d8 + 18 cold and fire damage.

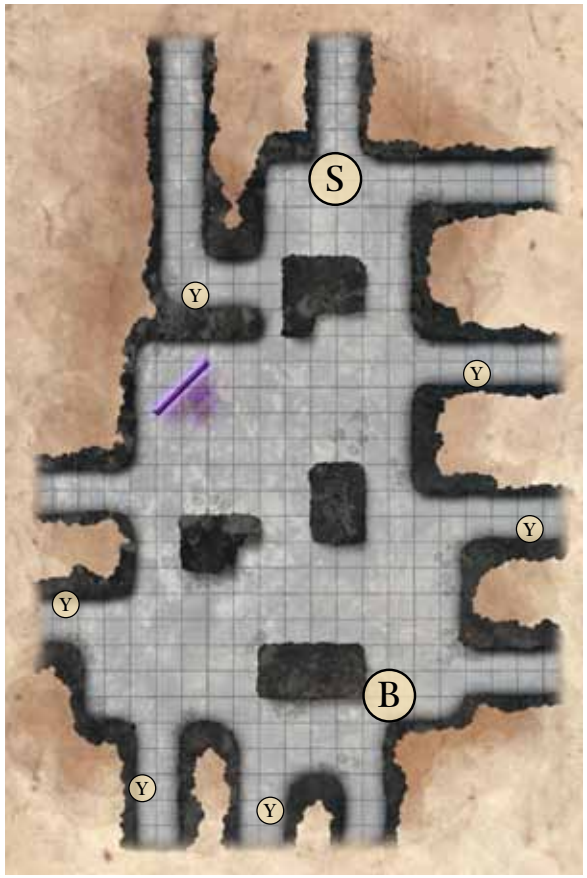
**Skills** Insight +21
**Str** 27 (+17) **Dex** 18 (+13) **Wis** 25 (+16)
**Con** 13 (+10) **Int** 19 (+13) **Cha** 26 (+17)
**Alignment** unaligned **Languages** Supernal
**Equipment** 2 longswords

If the characters interrogate any prisoners, they learn that the monsters were instructed to guard this crystal island and make sure no one interfered with it. They have no idea what its purpose might be.

The only clues the adventurers have are the fact that Tiamat is involved and that the indigo strand leads in a unusual direction. The characters can follow that strand to the next event.

**A Soul's Decision:** While the adventurers are investigating the crystal island, presumably after the combat has ended, a special soul passes through the strand—a halfling named Solinger Stowe. Stowe was an avenger dedicated to tracking down and defeating Bahamut's foes, and he was killed during the recent attacks on the Platinum Dragon's followers. His soul feels the presence of mortals nearby, and he makes an extraordinary effort to manifest for a few seconds and speak to the characters.

Stowe has only enough time to ask the adventurers who they are and what they are doing. When they answer, he tells them that he feels a strong pull along the indigo strand toward his master Bahamut, but




something seems wrong about it. If the adventurers managed to disrupt the magic of the crystal island, he no longer feels that pull. Instead, he realizes that a great enemy of Bahamut is at the other end of the indigo strand, so he allows himself to go that way. Stowe's form discorporates, and he flows quickly down the indigo strand toward whatever fate awaits him there.

**Treasure:** The *Sweet Shock* can be salvaged at the end of the encounter. This *astral clipper*, whose deck space is 4 squares by 10 squares, could serve the heroes well in their epic tier adventures.

# Event 4: Zehir's Raid

## Combat Encounter Level 22 (24,800 XP)

The indigo strand leads to an astral archipelago called the Scales. Beyond these islands looms the indigo veil of Tytherion, where Tiamat and Zehir hold sway. On a jungle-covered island, the strand leads into a tunnel. The characters must disembark in the normal gravity of the Scales to enter the tunnel, winding their way to a chamber where a shimmering violet portal marks the strand's end.

As the characters investigate the portal, Zehir's forces enter and attack, having seen and followed the adventurers' ship.

**Yuan-ti Abomination Spitter (S)** **Level 27 Artillery**
Large natural magical beast (reptile) XP 11,000

**HP** 186; **Bloodied** 93 **Initiative** +18
**AC** 39, **Fortitude** 39, **Reflex** 39, **Will** 37 **Perception** +22
**Speed** 7, climb 7
**Resist** 15 poison

**Standard Actions**

**Bite** (poison) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 1 (one creature); +32 vs. AC
*Hit:* 2d6 + 8 damage, and ongoing 15 poison damage (save ends).

**Spit Venom** (poison) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Ranged 20 (one creature); +32 vs. Reflex
*Hit:* 3d6 + 9 poison damage, and ongoing 15 poison damage (save ends).

**Venom Spray** (poison) ✦ **Recharge** ⚅ ⚄ ⚃
*Attack:* Close burst 5 (enemies in burst); +32 vs. Fortitude
*Hit:* 2d8 + 5 poison damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).
*Miss:* Half damage.

**Triggered Actions**

**Cobra Hood** ✦ **At-Will**
*Trigger:* An attack hits the spitter.
*Effect (Immediate Reaction):* The spitter gains a +4 bonus to AC until the end of its next turn.

**Str** 22 (+19) **Dex** 20 (+18) **Wis** 19 (+17)
**Con** 18 (+17) **Int** 7 (+11) **Cha** 10 (+13)
**Alignment** evil **Languages** Draconic

**Light:** Bright light from the portal.
**Monsters:** Yuan-ti abomination berserker (B), yuan-ti abomination spitter (S), 6 yuan-ti soulforms (Y)

**Yuan-ti Abomination Berserker (B)** **Level 26 Brute**
Large natural magical beast (reptile) XP 9,000

**HP** 293; **Bloodied** 146 **Initiative** +15
**AC** 37, **Fortitude** 38, **Reflex** 37, **Will** 36 **Perception** +16
**Speed** 7
**Resist** 15 poison

**Standard Actions**

**Slam** ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 2 (one creature); +31 vs. AC
*Hit:* 4d10 + 15 damage.

**Roundhouse Slam** ✦ **Recharge** ⚅ ⚄ ⚃
*Effect:* The berserker uses *slam* against each enemy adjacent to it.

**Triggered Actions**

**Berserk Attack** ✦ **At-Will**
*Requirement:* The berserker must be bloodied.
*Trigger:* An attack hits the berserker.
*Effect (Immediate Reaction):* The berserker uses *slam*.

**Str** 28 (+22) **Dex** 15 (+15) **Wis** 17 (+16)
**Con** 23 (+19) **Int** 7 (+11) **Cha** 10 (+13)
**Alignment** evil **Languages** Draconic

**6 Yuan-ti Soulforms (Y)** **Level 21 Minion Soldier**
Medium immortal humanoid (reptile) XP 800 each

**HP** 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. **Initiative** +17
**AC** 37, **Fortitude** 33, **Reflex** 33, **Will** 33 **Perception** +14
**Speed** 7
**Immune** poison

**Traits**

**Venomous Presence** (poison) ✦ **Aura** 1
A slowed enemy that willingly leaves the aura takes 14 poison damage. An enemy can take damage from a *venomous presence* aura only once per turn.

**Standard Actions**

**Scimitar** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 1 (one creature); +26 vs. AC
*Hit:* 14 damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).

**Skills** Bluff +20, Stealth +20
**Str** 18 (+14) **Dex** 20 (+15) **Wis** 18 (+14)
**Con** 20 (+15) **Int** 20 (+15) **Cha** 20 (+15)
**Alignment** evil **Languages** Common, Draconic
**Equipment** scimitar

**Lore:** Zehir has learned of Flame's plans to steal souls and use Bahamut's power to boost Tiamat's might. Since such power is likely to be used against him and his forces, the dark god has instructed his exalted to increase their raids against creatures loyal to Tiamat in the Scales. The strike force in this encounter is the first to find this location, and its members plan to destroy everything in the chamber.

**Tactics:** Zehir's forces attack the chamber from all directions at once, staying spread out to avoid area attacks. The berserker and the soulforms work to cut the characters off from escape, flanking to maintain combat advantage. The spitter slithers around the battleground, avoiding melee but staying close enough to the fray to employ *venom spray* effectively.

The berserker and the spitter are unwilling to die here, cutting their afterlife short, so they retreat if hard pressed. When the outcome of the battle is certain, you can wrap the fight up by having the old man with the canaries appear (see below). Any remaining yuan-ti disappear or flee when this happens.

## The Portal

The portal cannot be closed while Flame's magic is at work on the other side of it. Flame also enhanced the portal with protective magic. While within 20 squares of the portal, any creature that does not worship Tiamat takes a –2 penalty to all defenses and saving throws. As a minor action, a creature can steel itself against this magic by succeeding on a DC 35 Arcana check, Endurance check, Insight check, or Religion check. Success indicates the creature is immune to the effect until the start of its next turn.

Flame's magic provides additional protection for the portal against Zehir's servants. While the strike force is in the area, the portal deals 15 force damage to any creature that enters it, then slides that creature up to 4 squares and knocks it prone. A character trained in Arcana can sense this shift in power at the start of the encounter, when the portal changes color to an acid green. When Zehir's forces are defeated, the portal returns to its previous indigo hue.

## Old Man with the Canaries

Toward the end of the combat or shortly afterward, a bearded old human male in platinum-colored robes materializes in the chamber. Around his head fly seven canaries. A DC 19 Religion check reveals that Bahamut occasionally appears to mortals in this guise. This creature, however, is an aspect of Zehir (as the characters might guess from the color of the portal).

Aware of Flame's plots, Zehir has decided that the adventurers are his best chance to foil those plots. Even if the characters are able to discern his true identity, Zehir offers his assistance, believing that both parties benefit from ending Flame's threat.

Zehir conveys the following information.

- A servant of Tiamat has concocted a way to use the energy from the souls of Bahamut worshipers to give power to Tiamat.
- That servant, called Flame, is a mighty undead creature akin to a dracolich. He is using his own form as part of the process of converting the souls into energy.
- Flame has found a way to create multiple phylacteries, which he has hidden in his own past. To end the dragon lich's threat, someone has to go back in time and destroy the phylacteries, then return to the present to destroy Flame before he can create more of them.
- Flame used *Justice's Edge* to hide his phylacteries in the past, and the sword is still connected to those past timelines. If someone could obtain the sword and speak the proper commands, he or she could go back to those other times.
- Each phylactery is hidden and disguised, so a character holding the sword must detect magic to

identify a phylactery when it is in view. A phylactery glows brightly if properly identified.

- The magic to travel through time sets up a time bubble to protect timeline integrity. When traveling back in time, the adventurers have only a few minutes at a location where a phylactery is hidden. Time travelers cannot leave the bubble.
- The old man with the canaries has spies in Flame's inner circle, and he knows exactly where *Justice's Edge* is currently located. He also knows the ritual needed to move the characters back in time.

The characters must use the portal here to enter Flame's lair. After locating the sword and speaking the ritual words, they move through time until the ritual expires or they have destroyed all the phylacteries.

### Conclusion

When the characters finish talking to Zehir and goes through the portal, go to Event 5.

## Event 5: Into the Lair

**Roleplaying Encounter**

If the characters understand what they're here for and they work briskly at the task, this encounter might be nothing more than a quick snatch-the-sword mission. If they don't vacate this area fairly quickly, they get a taste of what awaits them later on.

**Light:** The fire column fills the chamber with bright light.

**When the characters step through the portal, read:**

*With a lurch, you step through into a chamber illuminated by a column of fire. Another column of coursing frost stands nearby. Beyond them both, an assortment of items is strewn across a stone dais etched with hundreds of runes. Waves of energy composed of bits of soul-stuff flow from the items on the dais to the columns. Prominent on the dais is a magnificent sword that must be Justice's Edge.*

The adventurers arrive in the chamber at the opposite end from the dais. (This arrangement foreshadows their reappearance in the lair after dealing with the phylacteries in the past.)

As long as the adventurers move with haste to grab the sword and speak the words of the time travel ritual (a standard action), they are transported to the next event without interruption. If they spend more than a few rounds here, Flame and his cohorts appear out of the columns and attack (see the map and statistics blocks in Event 9).

If Flame drops to 0 hit points while his phylacteries are intact, he disappears, then reappears out of a column 1 round later with more reinforcements. He adjusts his strategy in reaction to the characters' previous tactics.

The adventurers might begin combat here but then perform the ritual before defeating the monsters. If so, Flame and his servants are at full normal hit points when the characters return here in Event 9.

## Event 6: Young Flame

**Combat Encounter Level 21 (18,300 XP)**

The adventurers use *Justice's Edge* to travel back in time to find the first of Flame's phylacteries.

**When the ritual is performed, read:**

*The chamber of columns fades around you, replaced by a large chamber with a deep crater at its center. The crater glows with the red light of molten lava, and stifling heat fills the room.*

*Four giants stand in thin air before you, facing a red-orange dragon. Your sudden appearance leaves them looking confused. In a deep voice, the dragon says, "More looters hoping to steal my treasure. Killing them shall seal our alliance."*

**Detect Magic (Arcana DC 19):** *The giants are standing on a platform of invisible magical force.*

**Detect Magic while holding Justice's Edge (Arcana DC 19):** *The dragon glows even more brightly than the surrounding area. This clone of Flame is one of the lich's phylacteries.*

**Perception DC 35:** Show the players the boundaries of the invisible platform.

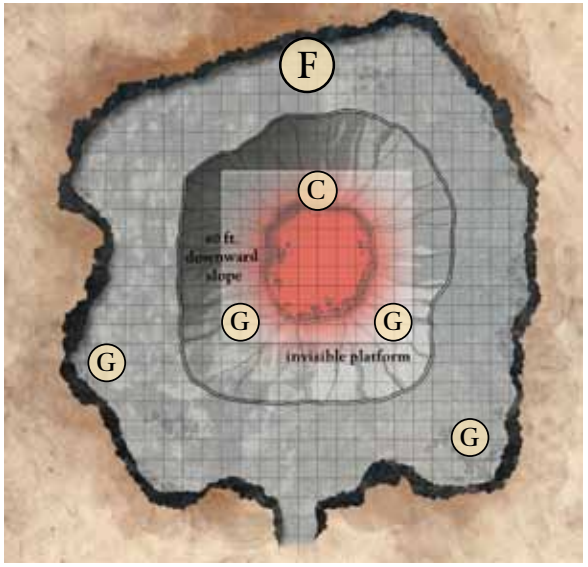
**Light:** The glow of lava fills the area with bright light.

**Ceiling:** The chamber's ceiling is 20 feet above the crater opening.

**Monsters:** Flame's clone (F), fire giant forgecaller (C), 4 fire giants (G).

The characters appear in the start area.

**Tactics:** The gigantic creatures here use their reach and size to divide the adventurers. Flame



allows the giants to bear the brunt of the attack, standing back to use *arcane spikes* twice per round.

### Lava Crater

A 60-foot slope separates the lava from the mouth of the crater. A creature that enters the crater slides down the slope, but can stop its descent with a DC 26 Athletics check. A creature that plunges into the lava stream from the mouth of the crater takes 3d10 falling damage and 6d10 fire damage. A creature that starts its turn in the lava takes 30 fire damage. Swimming in the lava requires a DC 26 Athletics check. Climbing the crater is a DC 19 Athletics check.

### Conclusion

As soon as the clone drops to 0 hit points, time slows to a halt, giving the adventures time for a short rest. The characters then fade into the next event.

## Event 7: Vengeful Flame

**Encounter Level 23 (29,050 XP)**

The time bubble brings the adventurers to the period after Flame's first death, when the wily dragon had set a trap to gain revenge on those who originally killed him.

The monsters appear here only after the adventurers have had a chance to move around the room.

**Light:** Bright magical light glows throughout this area.

**Ceiling:** The chamber's ceiling is 20 feet above the walkway around the perimeter of the room, and 40 feet above the bottom of the sloping floor.

**Sloping Floor:** The chamber's bowl-shaped interior is difficult terrain.

**Monsters:** Vengeful Flame (elder red dragon), ball of ice trap, hezrou (if the trap triggers).

The characters appear in random locations around the room's upper tier.

**Flame's Clone (F)** — **Level 22 Elite Controller (Leader)**
Huge natural magical beast (dragon) — XP 8,300

**HP** 416; **Bloodied** 208 — **Initiative** +17
**AC** 36, **Fortitude** 35, **Reflex** 33, **Will** 34 — **Perception** +20
**Speed** 8, fly 10 (hover) — Darkvision
**Resist** 15 fire, 15 poison
**Saving Throws** +2; **Action Points** 1

**Traits**

**Sorcerous Assistance**
Allies who can see Flame gain a +2 power bonus to attack rolls and saving throws, and a +4 power bonus to damage rolls.

**Action Recovery**
Whenever Flame ends his turn, any charm, dazing, stunning, or dominating effect on him ends.

**Standard Actions**

**Bite** (fire, poison) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 3 (one creature); +27 vs. AC
*Hit:* 2d10 + 9 damage, ongoing 10 fire and poison damage (save ends), and Flame slides the target up to 3 squares.
*Miss:* Flame can slide the target 1 square.

**Arcane Spikes** ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Ranged 20 (one creature); +25 vs. Reflex
*Hit:* 2d6 + 18 damage, and the target is restrained until the end of Flame's next turn.
*Effect:* The target is slowed (save ends).

**Draconic Fury** ✦ **At-Will**
Flame makes two basic attacks.

**Toxic Breath** (fire, poison) ✦ **Recharge** when first bloodied
*Attack:* Close blast 5 (creatures in the blast); +23 vs. Fortitude
*Hit:* 3d10 + 18 fire and poison damage.
*Miss:* Half damage.

**Triggered Actions**

**Draconic Splendor** ✦ **Encounter**
*Trigger:* Flame is first bloodied.
*Effect (Free Action):* Close burst 5 (allies in the burst); the target can shift up to half its speed and make a basic attack as a free action. All effects on Flame end, and he can shift up to half his speed.

**Skills** Arcana +20, Bluff +23, Insight +20, Intimidate +23
**Str** 26 (+19) **Dex** 22 (+17) **Wis** 18 (+15)
**Con** 24 (+18) **Int** 18 (+15) **Cha** 24 (+18)
**Alignment** evil **Languages** Common, Draconic

**4 Fire Giants (G)** — **Level 18 Soldier**
Large elemental humanoid (fire, giant) — XP 2,000 each

**HP** 174; **Bloodied** 87 — **Initiative** +11
**AC** 34, **Fortitude** 34, **Reflex** 28, **Will** 28 — **Perception** +14
**Speed** 8
**Resist** 15 fire

**Standard Actions**

**Searing Greatsword** (fire, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 2 (one creature); +23 vs. AC
*Hit:* 2d12 + 13 fire damage.
*Effect:* The giant marks the target until the end of the giant's next turn.

**Sweeping Sword** (fire, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Close blast 2 (enemies in the blast); +23 vs. AC
*Hit:* 2d12 + 13 fire damage.
*Effect:* The giant marks the target until the end of the giant's next turn.

**Str** 23 (+15) **Dex** 11 (+9) **Wis** 10 (+9)
**Con** 22 (+15) **Int** 10 (+9) **Cha** 11 (+9)
**Alignment** evil **Languages** Giant
**Equipment** chainmail, greatsword

**Fire Giant Forgecaller (C)** — **Level 18 Artillery**
Large elemental humanoid (fire, giant) — XP 2,000

**HP** 136; **Bloodied** 68 — **Initiative** +11
**AC** 32, **Fortitude** 33, **Reflex** 29, **Will** 30 — **Perception** +17
**Speed** 8
**Resist** 15 fire

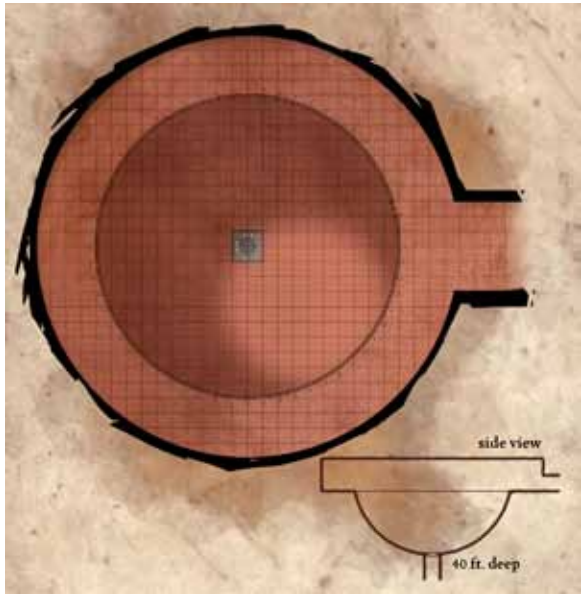
**Standard Actions**

**Smoldering Mace** (fire, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 2 (one creature); +23 vs. AC
*Hit:* 2d10 + 11 fire damage.

**Fire Pillar** (fire) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Ranged 20 (one creature); +23 vs. Reflex
*Hit:* 3d10 + 10 fire damage.

**Flaming Burst** (fire) ✦ **Recharge** ⚅
*Attack:* Area burst 2 within 10 (creatures in the burst); +23 vs. Reflex
*Hit:* 2d10 + 10 fire damage, and ongoing 10 fire damage (save ends).
*Miss:* Half damage, and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).

**Str** 23 (+15) **Dex** 15 (+11) **Wis** 16 (+12)
**Con** 22 (+15) **Int** 10 (+9) **Cha** 11 (+9)
**Alignment** evil **Languages** Giant
**Equipment** mace




**When the party arrives, read:**

*The center of this perfectly round chamber slopes down like the interior of a bowl. The outer perimeter of the room is flat. In the center of the depression, 20 feet below the perimeter, a large trapdoor is set into the floor. Sigils cover the door, and on its face are three large dials numbered from 1 to 101. Between the three dials stands a circular wheel that looks as though it could be turned to open the door.*

*Four iron chains shackle a kobold to the top of the trapdoor. The chains emit a sickly purple glow that appears to cause the kobold great pain.*

**Detect Magic (Arcana DC 19):** *The chains holding the kobold are draining its life force. Another magical field, some sort of teleportation magic, swirls around the kobold. The chains hold that field in check.*

**Detect Magic while holding Justice's Edge (Arcana DC 26):** *A slight glow visible through the trapdoor tells you that Flame's phylactery lies beneath it.*

**Elder Red Dragon** **Level 22 Solo Soldier**
Huge natural magical beast (dragon) XP 20,750

**HP** 832; **Bloodied** 416 **Initiative** +18
**AC** 38, **Fortitude** 36, **Reflex** 33, **Will** 32 **Perception** +19
**Speed** 8, fly 10 Darkvision
**Resist** 20 fire
**Saving Throws** +5; **Action Points** 2

**Traits**

**Action Recovery**
Whenever the dragon ends its turn, any dazing, stunning, or dominating effect on it ends.

**Instinctive Assault**
On an initiative of 10 + its initiative check, the dragon can use a free action to use *bite* or *claw*. If the dragon cannot use a free action to make this attack due to a dominating or stunning effect, then that effect ends instead of the dragon making the attack.

**Standard Actions**

**Bite** (fire) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 3 (one creature); +27 vs. AC.
*Hit:* 2d10 + 6 damage. The target is grabbed and takes ongoing 15 fire damage, or ongoing 25 fire damage if the dragon is bloodied, until the grab ends (escape DC 30).

**Claw** ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 3 (one or two creatures); +27 vs. AC. If the dragon targets only one creature, it can make this attack twice against that creature.
*Hit:* 3d10 + 14 damage, and the dragon grabs the target (escape DC 27) if it has fewer than two creatures grabbed.

**Immolate Foe** (fire) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞
*Attack:* Ranged 20 (one creature); +25 vs. Reflex
*Hit:* 4d10 + 7 fire damage, and ongoing 20 fire damage (save ends).
*Miss:* Half damage, and ongoing 10 fire damage (save ends).

**Breath Weapon** (fire) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞
*Attack:* Close blast 5 (creatures in the blast); +25 vs. Reflex
*Hit:* 4d12 + 17 fire damage.
*Miss:* Half damage.

**Triggered Actions**

**Tail Strike** ✦ **At-Will**
*Trigger:* An enemy leaves a square within 3 squares of the dragon.
*Attack (Immediate Reaction):* Melee 4 (triggering enemy); +25 vs. Reflex
*Hit:* 2d8 + 4 damage, and the target falls prone.

**Bloodied Breath** ✦ **Encounter**
*Trigger:* The dragon is first bloodied.
*Effect (Free Action): Breath weapon* recharges, and the dragon uses it.

**Skills** Bluff +18, Insight +19
**Str** 26 (+19) **Dex** 21 (+16) **Wis** 17 (+14)
**Con** 24 (+18) **Int** 14 (+13) **Cha** 15 (+13)
**Alignment** evil **Languages** Common, Draconic

## Saving Ivorpo

Ivorpo is the kobold chained to the trapdoor. A character who examines Ivorpo and succeeds on a DC 19 Heal check can tell that he has 5 rounds to live.

**Talking to Ivorpo:** The kobold was the leader of a tribe that Flame enslaved. When Ivorpo refused to bend to Flame's demands, Flame had him chained to the magic trapdoor. Ivorpo tells the characters who he is, and reveals that he has activated a magic stone that should teleport him to safety if he is released.

*Fun with Time Travel:* Ivorpo asks the adventurers who they are. If they tell him—and if they remember to tell him the time and place where they can receive his message from Iantli—the blank scroll that Iantli gave them suddenly flares with magical light. The parchment now contains a brief note explaining that the trapdoor is not really locked and that the dials are for show. The characters gain automatic successes with Perception checks and Thievery checks made while opening the trapdoor.

**Breaking the Chains:** As a standard action, a character adjacent to the trapdoor can attempt a DC 35 Arcana check, Athletics check, Dungeoneering check, or Thievery check on one of the four chains. A success removes that chain from the kobold.

| Hezrou | Level 22 Brute |
|---|---|
| Large elemental humanoid (demon) | XP 4,150 |
| **HP** 254; **Bloodied** 127 | **Initiative** +17 |
| **AC** 34, **Fortitude** 36, **Reflex** 33, **Will** 33 | **Perception** +17 |
| **Speed** 6 | Darkvision |
| **Traits** | |
| ☼ **Noxious Stench** (poison) ✦ **Aura** 2 | |
| Any enemy that makes an attack while in the aura takes 10 poison damage, or 20 poison damage while the hezrou is bloodied. | |
| **Standard Actions** | |
| ⊕ **Slam** ✦ **At-Will** | |
| *Attack:* Melee 2 (one creature); +27 vs. AC | |
| *Hit:* 4d10 + 10 damage. | |
| ⸸ **Bite** ✦ **Recharge** ⚃ ⚄ ⚅ | |
| *Attack:* Melee 2 (one creature); +27 vs. AC | |
| *Hit:* 6d12 + 10 damage. | |
| **Triggered Actions** | |
| **Variable Resistance** ✦ **2/Encounter** | |
| *Trigger:* The hezrou takes acid, cold, fire, lightning, or thunder damage. | |
| *Effect (Free Action):* The hezrou gains resist 20 to the triggering damage type until the end of the encounter or until it uses *variable resistance* again. | |
| **Str** 28 (+20) **Dex** 23 (+17) **Wis** 23 (+17) | |
| **Con** 24 (+18) **Int** 8 (+10) **Cha** 16 (+14) | |
| **Alignment** chaotic evil **Languages** Abyssal | |

Each chain has AC/Reflex 10, Fortitude 5, and 25 hit points.

**Development:** If the adventurers release Ivorpo before the end of the fifth round, he teleports away. A hezrou appears in Ivorpo's place if he dies. See "Tactics."

**When Ivorpo dies or leaves, read:**

*A massive red dragon suddenly appears, flying level with the upper tier of the chamber. At the same time, a 15-foot-diameter ball of ice materializes along the sloping floor, hurtling toward you.*

Roll initiative for the rolling ball of ice. On its turn, the ball of ice rolls around the bowl-shaped central portion of the room and makes a separate attack against each enemy in that area on its turn. The ball of ice treats the characters as enemies, and Flame and the hezrou as allies; see the trap's statistics for more information.

| Rolling Ball of Ice | Level 22 Trap |
|---|---|
| Object | XP 4,150 |
| **Detect** – | **Initiative** +20 |
| **Immune** attacks | |
| **Arcana** (Trained Only) | |
| ✦ **DC 36 (Minor Action):** The character realizes the trap can be controlled; see Countermeasures. | |
| **Standard Actions** | |
| ⸸ **Attack** (cold) ✦ **At-Will** | |
| *Attack:* Melee 1 (each enemy in the room's bowl-shaped area); +25 vs. Reflex | |
| *Hit:* 2d8 + 6 cold damage, and the target falls prone. In addition, the target loses any immunity or resistance to fire (save ends). | |
| **Countermeasures** | |
| ✦ **Control:** Arcana (trained only) DC 36 (standard action). *Success:* The character chooses which creatures, if any, the rolling ball of ice attacks on its next turn. The ball of ice is still limited to creatures within the room's bowl-shaped area. | |
| ✦ **Evade:** Acrobatics DC 36 (minor action). *Success:* The trap takes a -5 penalty to its next attack roll made against the character. | |

**Tactics:** When Ivorpo leaves or dies, Flame teleports in, appearing in the air above the room's outer ledge. The rolling ball of ice trap also triggers and attacks all enemies within the bowl on its turn. It does not consider Flame or the hezrou its enemies.

Flame spreads his fire attacks out at first, then focuses on characters who show no resistance or immunity to fire (including characters who lose such defenses after an attack by the rolling ball of ice trap). When targeting his attacks, the dragon doesn't concern himself with the hezrou's health.

Because of the timeline integrity maintained by the time bubble, until the phylactery is destroyed, Flame cannot drop below one-quarter of his full hit point total.

A hezrou uses its *variable resistance* in the first round to gain fire resistance. It keeps that resistance unless it takes more energy damage of a different type from the characters than it does from Flame's attacks.

Flame is not aware that the diamond under the trapdoor is a phylactery for his older self. As such, he is not overly concerned by the adventurers attempting to open the trapdoor.

## Opening the Trapdoor

The demilich Flame has protected the trapdoor with trickery and magic that requires a number of skill checks to overcome. Each check mentioned below is a standard action unless otherwise noted. A character must be adjacent to the trapdoor to attempt any of these checks.

A DC 26 Perception check (a minor action) allows a character to realize that the dials and knobs are mere decoration, and the door has only a central lock that must be bypassed. This check can be attempted even if a hezrou is atop the door.

When a hezrou is no longer atop the door, a character can attempt any of the checks listed below to try to manipulate the door. The door has AC/Reflex 4, Fortitude 12, and 120 hit points. If a check is failed, or if the door is attacked before the protective magic has been removed, a hezrou appears atop the door and attacks.

- ✦ A trained DC 26 Arcana check (a minor action) detects the magic that protects the door.
- ✦ A DC 35 Thievery check opens the lock.
- ✦ A DC 35 Arcana check removes the protective magic from the opening wheel.
- ✦ A DC 35 Athletics check is needed to pull the door open.

If a hezrou is present in the chamber when another would appear, the existing hezrou instead is restored to full hit points.

### Phylactery Destruction

The trapdoor covers a small chamber that holds a large diamond. A character holding *Justice's Edge* who succeeds on a DC 19 Arcana check to detect magic confirms that the diamond is the phylactery. With the trapdoor open, the phylactery can be attacked: It has AC/Reflex 3, Fortitude 15; immune to necrotic, poison, psychic, forced movement, all conditions, ongoing damage; and 20 hit points. When destroyed, the diamond sheds an outer layer, becoming smaller as the phylactery's magic is broken.

### Conclusion

After the phylactery is destroyed, time slows to a halt, giving the adventures time for a short rest. The characters then fade into the next event.

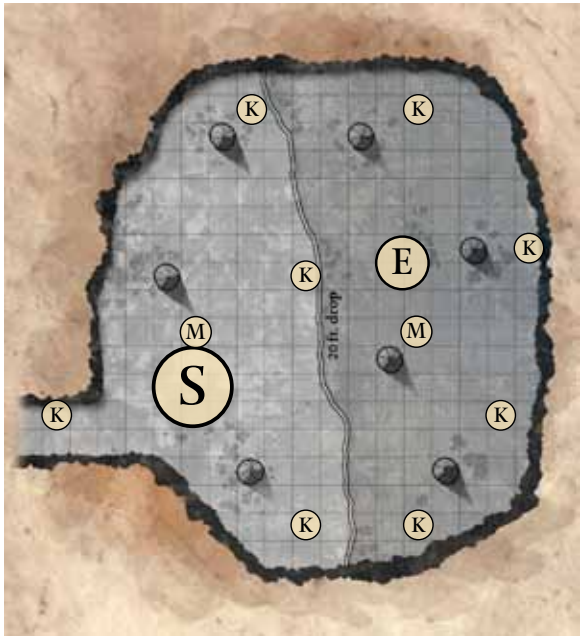
## Event 8: Rekindled Flame

**Encounter Level 22 (21,250 XP)**

The third and final phylactery is hidden in the lair of a group of flamebred kobolds—the spawn of one of Flame's dalliances while the dragon was shapechanged. The kobolds are attempting to turn Flame into a dracolich following his second death, hoping to use a captive magma elemental to help.

**Light:** The diamonds and other gems embedded in the surfaces of the cavern fill the area with dim light. The elemental sheds bright light to a distance of 4 squares.

**Monsters:** Flame, skeletal dragon (S), greater magma elemental (E), 2 flamebred kobold mages (M), 8 flamebred kobold chargers (K).




Have each player roll a d20 as the encounter begins. On a result of 10 or higher, that player's character appears on the room's higher side. The character otherwise appears in the lower section.

**When the party arrives, read:**

*A steep 20-foot ledge separates one side of this chamber from the other. On the higher section, a winged kobold wielding a dagger bows before a huge skeletal dragon while other kobold guards look on. In the lower section of the chamber, another winged kobold gives instructions to more guards, who stand cautiously back from a towering humanoid creature made of lava.*

*Seven strange-looking stalagmites rise from the cavern floor. These formations, along with the cavern's other surfaces, contain flecks of shining diamond and garnet.*

**Detect Magic while Holding Justice's Edge (Arcana DC 19):** *The stalagmites glow brightly.*

The ledge requires a DC 15 Athletics check to climb.

**Flame, Skeletal Dragon (S)** **Level 24 Elite Brute**
Huge natural animate (dragon, undead) XP 12,100

**HP** 548; **Bloodied** 272 **Initiative** +18
**AC** 36, **Fortitude** 36, **Reflex** 35, **Will** 36 **Perception** +12
**Speed** 8, fly 6 Blindsight 2, darkvision
**Immune** charm, disease, poison; **Resist** 20 fire, 15 necrotic
**Saving Throws** +2; **Action Points** 1

**Standard Actions**

**Bite ✦ At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 2 (one creature); +29 vs. AC
*Hit:* 4d10 + 18 damage.

**Claw ✦ Recharge** when Flame is grabbing fewer than two creatures
*Attack:* Melee 2 (one creature); +29 vs. AC
*Hit:* 4d8 + 19 damage, and target is grabbed (escape DC 28).

**Frightful Presence** (fear) **✦ Encounter**
*Attack:* Close burst 10 (enemies in the burst); +27 vs. Will
*Hit:* The target is stunned until the end of Flame's next turn.
*Miss:* The target is dazed until the end of Flame's next turn.

**Minor Actions**

**Crush ✦ At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 2 (one creature grabbed by Flame that has not been attacked with *crush* this turn); +27 vs. Fortitude
*Hit:* 2d10 + 19 damage.

**Triggered Actions**

**Tail Sweep ✦ Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞
*Trigger:* A melee attack hits Flame.
*Attack (Immediate Reaction):* Close blast 3 (enemies in the blast); +27 vs. Reflex
*Hit:* 3d8 + 18 damage, and the target falls prone.
*Miss:* Half damage.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Str** 24 (+19) | **Dex** 22 (+18) | **Wis** 10 (+12) |
| **Con** 22 (+18) | **Int** 8 (+11) | **Cha** 24 (+19) |

**Alignment** evil **Languages** Draconic

### Stalagmites

The seven stalagmites make up a composite phylactery, the magical essence of which flows between them. All seven stalagmites must be destroyed during the same round for the phylactery's magic to fail. At the start of each round, any destroyed stalagmite regrows unless all other stalagmites are also destroyed.

**Greater Magma Elemental (E)** **Level 22 Brute**
Large elemental magical beast (earth, fire) XP 4,150

**HP** 255; **Bloodied** 127 **Initiative** +18
**AC** 34, **Fortitude** 35, **Reflex** 34, **Will** 32 **Perception** +12
**Speed** 8
**Vulnerable 5** cold (see *obsidian crust*)

**Traits**

**Obsidian Crust**
When a magma elemental takes cold damage, it is also slowed until the end of its next turn.

**Standard Actions**

**Slam** (fire) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 1 (one creature); +27 vs. AC
*Hit:* 6d10 + 5 fire damage

**Eruption** (fire) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞
*Attack:* Close burst 1 (creatures in burst); +27 vs. AC
*Hit:* 6d10 + 5 fire damage

**Triggered Actions**

**Magma Burst** (fire) ✦ **Encounter**
*Trigger:* The magma elemental drops to 0 hit points.
*Attack (No Action):* Close burst 1 (creatures in burst); +23 vs. Reflex
*Hit:* 3d8 + 5 fire damage and the target is petrified and takes ongoing 20 fire damage (save ends both). This ongoing fire damage ignores the resistance provided by the petrified condition. The magma elemental is destroyed.

**Str** 27 (+19) **Dex** 24 (+18) **Wis** 12 (+12)
**Con** 25 (+18) **Int** 12 (+12) **Cha** 25 (+18)
**Alignment** unaligned **Languages** Primordial

When any stalagmite first regrows, a DC 35 Arcana check made as a free action enables a character to understand that all the stalagmites must be destroyed simultaneously. The second time a stalagmite regrows, lower the DC to 26. On subsequent occurrences, the DC is 19.

## Phylactery Destruction

A stalagmite can be attacked: It has AC/Reflex 3, Fortitude 15; immune to necrotic, poison, psychic, forced movement, all conditions, ongoing damage; and 25 hit points. A stalagmite can also be destroyed by a character who succeeds on a DC 35 Arcana check, Athletics check, Dungeoneering check, Nature check, or Thievery check while adjacent to the stalagmite.

**8 Flamebred Kobold Chargers (K)** **Level 18 Minion Skirmisher**
Small natural humanoid (reptile) XP 500 each

**HP** 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. **Initiative** +17
**AC** 32, **Fortitude** 30, **Reflex** 31, **Will** 30 **Perception** +12
**Speed** 8 Darkvision
**Immune** fire

**Traits**

**Ferocious Charge**
When the kobold charges, it triggers no attacks for leaving the initial square.

**Standard Actions**

**Spear** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 1 (one creature); +23 vs. AC
*Hit:* 13 damage.

**Minor Actions**

**Shifty** ✦ **At-Will**
*Effect:* The kobold shifts 1 square.

**Triggered Actions**

**Burn Out** ✦ **Encounter**
*Trigger:* The kobold drops to 0 hit points.
*Effect (Free Action):* The kobold charges an enemy.

**Skills** Acrobatics +20, Athletics +14
**Str** 10 (+9) **Dex** 22 (+15) **Wis** 16 (+12)
**Con** 16 (+12) **Int** 12 (+10) **Cha** 14 (+11)
**Alignment** evil **Languages** Common, Draconic
**Equipment** hide armor, spear

**Tactics:** Flame starts by unleashing *frightful presence*. He then grabs and crushes enemies as quickly and violently as possible.

Because of the timeline integrity maintained by the time bubble, until the phylactery is destroyed, Flame cannot drop below one-quarter of his full hit point total.

The magma elemental engages as many enemies as possible each round, shifting its position and climbing down or up the ledge to do so.

Kobold chargers rush throughout the room in a mad frenzy of violence, charging whenever they can.

**2 Flamebred Kobold Mages (M)** **Level 18 Minion Artillery**
Small natural humanoid (reptile) XP 500 each

**HP** 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. **Initiative** +11
**AC** 32, **Fortitude** 29, **Reflex** 30, **Will** 31 **Perception** +12
**Speed** 6, fly 6 Darkvision
**Immune** fire

**Standard Actions**

**Dagger** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 1 (one creature); +23 vs. AC
*Hit:* 13 damage.

**Searing Light** (fire, radiant) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Ranged 20 (one or two creatures); +23 vs. Reflex
*Hit:* 10 fire and radiant damage.

**Minor Actions**

**Shifty** ✦ **At-Will**
*Effect:* The kobold shifts 1 square.

**Triggered Actions**

**Dying Breath** (fire, radiant) ✦ **Encounter**
*Trigger:* The kobold drops to 0 hit points.
*Attack (Free Action):* Area burst 1 within 10 (creatures in the burst); +23 vs. Reflex
*Hit:* 15 fire and radiant damage.
*Miss:* Half damage.

**Str** 10 (+9) **Dex** 14 (+11) **Wis** 16 (+12)
**Con** 16 (+12) **Int** 18 (+13) **Cha** 22 (+15)
**Alignment** evil **Languages** Common, Draconic
**Equipment** robes, dagger

They make Acrobatics checks to jump from the ledge to the lower level without damage.

The kobold mages fly to avoid melee, using *searing light* and *dying breath* from a distance.

## Conclusion

After this final phylactery is destroyed, the time travel ritual ends, pulling the adventurers back to the present. The magic of the ritual replenishes the characters as if they had taken a short rest. The characters then fade into the next event.

# Event 9: Returning in Time

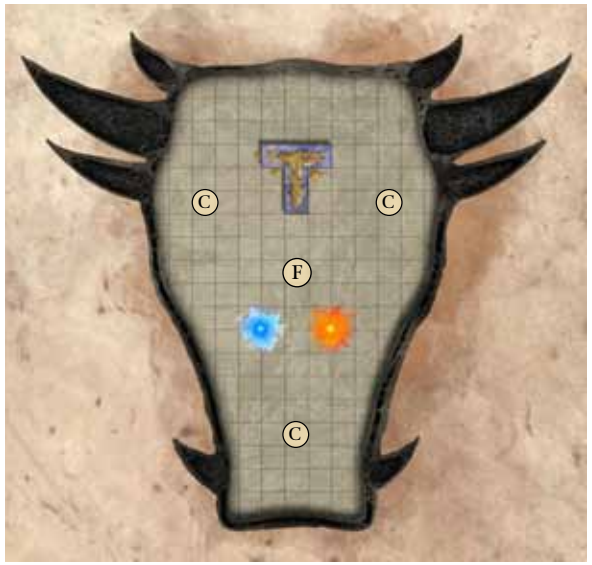
**Encounter Level 25 (42,700 XP)**

Having dealt with Flame's phylacteries in the past, the adventurers return to the dragon demilich's lair in Tytherion.

**Light:** The fire column fills the chamber with bright light.

**Monsters:** Flame, dragon demilich (F), 3 dragonborn chosen of Tiamat (C).

The adventurers arrive in the lair at the same spot they entered when they visited this place in Event 5.




**Flame, Dragon Demilich (F)** **Level 24 Solo Controller**
Medium natural animate (dragon, undead) XP 30,250

**HP** 896; **Bloodied** 448 **Initiative** +18
**AC** 38, **Fortitude** 36, **Reflex** 35, **Will** 37 **Perception** +21
**Speed** fly 10 (hover) Blindsight 5, darkvision
**Immune** disease, poison;
**Resist** 20 fire, 15 necrotic, 15 psychic
**Saving Throws** +5; **Action Points** 2

**Traits**

**Dooming Presence** (fear) ✦ **Aura** 2
While in the aura, any enemy that makes a saving throw must roll twice and take the lower result. In addition, enemies in the aura can neither make opportunity attacks nor gain temporary hit points.

**Indomitable**
Whenever Flame starts his turn, he can transfer one effect on him that a save can end to another creature that he can see within 10 squares of him. The transferred effect ends on Flame. Whenever Flame ends his turn, any dazing, stunning, or dominating effect on him ends.

**Instinctive Assault**
On an initiative of 10 + his initiative check, Flame can take a free action to make a basic attack. If he cannot take a free action to make this attack due to an effect, then that effect ends instead of Flame making the attack.

**Soul Gems**
Flame's twelve *soul gems* can each hold one soul. At the start of an encounter, the *soul gems* contain up to three souls. After Flame is destroyed (see *soul phylacteries*), crushing a soul gem destroys the gem and releases any soul within.

**Soul Phylacteries**
When Flame drops to 0 hit points, he and his *soul gems* crumble to dust but are not destroyed. He and his gems reappear in 2d6 days unless all his phylacteries are destroyed. If Flame's phylacteries have been destroyed, his *soul gems* do not crumble to dust when he is destroyed.

**Standard Actions**

**Disintegrating Bite** (fear) ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Melee 1 (one creature); +29 vs. AC
*Hit:* 2d12 + 19 damage, and ongoing 15 damage (save ends).
*Effect:* Flame slides the target up to 2 squares.

**Corrupting Bolt** ✦ **At-Will**
*Attack:* Ranged 10 (one creature); +27 vs. Reflex
*Hit:* 5d10 + 20 damage, and the target cannot regain hit points (save ends).

**Draconic Fury** ✦ **At-Will**
*Effect:* Flame makes two basic attacks.

**Balefire Breath** (fire, necrotic) ✦ **Recharge** when first bloodied
*Attack:* Close blast 5 (enemies in the blast); +27 vs. Fortitude
*Hit:* Ongoing 40 fire and necrotic damage (save ends), Flame pushes the target up to 4 squares, and the target falls prone.
*Miss:* Ongoing 20 fire and necrotic damage (save ends), and Flame pushes the target up to 2 squares.

**Move Actions**

**Dread Teleport** (fear, teleportation) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⚅
*Effect:* Flame teleports up to 8 squares. Any enemy adjacent to the space Flame leaves is dazed until the start of that enemy's next turn.

**Minor Actions**

**Soul Drain** ✦ **At-Will** (1/round)
*Attack:* Ranged 10 (one creature); +27 vs. Will
*Hit:* The target is dazed and slowed (save ends both). If the target dies while under the effect of *soul drain*, its soul becomes trapped in one of Flame's *soul gems*.
*First Failed Saving Throw:* The target is instead unconscious and restrained (save ends both).
*Second Failed Saving Throw:* The target dies.

**Consume Soul** ✦ **Recharge** when first bloodied
*Effect:* One soul in Flame's *soul gems* is destroyed. Flame gains an action point, and all his encounter and recharge powers, other than this one, recharge.

**Triggered Actions**

**Soul Shred** ✦ **Encounter**
*Trigger:* A melee or a ranged attack hits Flame.
*Effect (Immediate Reaction):* Close burst 5 (one enemy under the effect of *soul drain* in the burst); the target takes the same amount of damage Flame took.

**Skills** Arcana +21, Bluff +25, Insight +21, Intimidate +25
**Str** 24 (+19) **Dex** 22 (+18) **Wis** 18 (+16)
**Con** 24 (+19) **Int** 18 (+16) **Cha** 27 (+20)
**Alignment** evil **Languages** Supernal

| 3 Dragonborn Chosen of Tiamat (C) | Level 22 Soldier |
|---|---|
| Medium natural humanoid | XP 4,150 |
| **HP** 208; **Bloodied** 104 | **Initiative** +19 |
| **AC** 38, **Fortitude** 34, **Reflex** 32, **Will** 33 | **Perception** +18 |
| **Speed** 7 | Darkvision |
| **Resist** 15 poison | |
| **Traits** | |
| ☼ **Draconic Majesty** ✦ **Aura** 2 | |
| While in the aura, an unmarked enemy that willingly leaves the aura or makes an attack that fails to target a dragonborn that has this aura active provokes an opportunity attack from the dragonborn. | |
| **Inopportune Doom** | |
| A creature the dragonborn hits with an opportunity attack loses all resistances (save ends). | |
| **Tiamat's Fury** | |
| While bloodied, the dragonborn gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls and a +5 bonus to damage rolls. | |
| **Standard Actions** | |
| ⊕ **Greatspear** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will** | |
| Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +27 vs. AC | |
| Hit: 2d10 + 19 damage, and the target falls prone. | |
| ⸸ **Tiamat's Sting** (poison, weapon) ✦ **Recharge** if this power's *greatspear* attack misses | |
| *Effect:* The dragonborn uses *greatspear*. If the attack hits, the target also takes ongoing 15 poison damage (save ends). | |
| *First Failed Saving Throw:* The target is also dominated until the end of the dragonborn's next turn. | |
| **Skills** Athletics +24, Intimidate +21 | |
| **Str** 27 (+19) **Dex** 22 (+17) **Wis** 24 (+18) | |
| **Con** 24 (+18) **Int** 13 (+12) **Cha** 20 (+16) | |
| **Alignment** evil **Languages** Common, Draconic | |
| **Equipment** greatspear | |

**When the party arrives, read:**

*You arrive back in the chamber with the elemental columns, from which you earlier claimed Justice's Edge. A dragon skull now floats in the air here, its eyes and open maw burning with unholy light. Nearby, three dragonborn warriors level their ornate greatspears at you.*

*A booming voice resonates from the skull. "So you think you can defeat me? The Dragon Queen shall have your souls!"*

*From inside the shining horns and teeth of the draconic skull, tiny figures appear to move. Most you do not recognize, but three are familiar to you. One is surely Lady Glorianna, and two others resemble Father Narthex and the manifestation of the halfling Solinger Stowe.*

## Elemental Pillars

Flame is using the elemental pillars to focus the energy drawn from Bahamut through souls and artifacts, shaping the soul forms of Tiamat's exalted into greater and larger forms.

Both columns are blocking terrain. A creature that ends its turn adjacent to the fire pillar or the frost pillar takes 15 fire damage or 15 cold damage, respectively. A creature that ends its turn adjacent to both pillars takes 30 cold and fire damage. Creatures that worship Tiamat take no damage from the pillars.

A character who succeeds on an Arcana check or Religion check (DC 37 as a minor action; DC 28 as a standard action) suppresses the effect of one pillar until the end of the character's next turn.

Taking relics from the dais has no effect on the pillars, since Flame has already subverted their power with his rituals. With a DC 20 Arcana check or Religion check (a minor action), a character understands that the dragon demilich must be slain to end his influence.

## Soul Consumption and Sacrifice

Flame's soul gems contain three souls: Lady Glorianna, Father Narthex, and Solinger Stowe. At some point during the combat, Flame attempts to use his *consume soul* power, destroying one of the captured souls. When Flame prepares to use this power, each adventurer can attempt a DC 21 Arcana check or Religion check as a free action. Success lets a character know that Flame is about to consume a soul, and that a character can save the soul by sacrificing his or her own life. The character making the sacrifice dies instantly, but his or her soul is not consumed. The soul that Flame intended to consume is spared. Flame cannot benefit from his use of *consume soul*, and can no longer use *consume soul* in this encounter.

**Tactics:** Flame stays near the pillars of fire and frost, forcing the adventurers to come close to them. He keeps at least one adventurer under the effect of *soul drain*, using *soul shred* on that character when he takes heavy damage from a melee or ranged attack.

The Chosen of Tiamat are here to protect Flame. They position themselves to make it as difficult as possible for the characters to approach the demilich.

# Concluding the Adventure

If all the phylacteries from the past have been destroyed and Flame drops to 0 hit points, the magic that holds his lair together fails. Any remaining Chosen of Tiamat crumble into ash, and the room starts to shake. *Justice's Edge* begins to glow brightly, and the character wielding it knows instinctively that the adventurers have a couple of minutes to gather the items here before the power of the sword teleports them back to the Scales and Flame's now-inert soul portal.

The old man with the canaries still waits at the portal. At this point, he might reveal himself to be Zehir, or he could retain his disguise and give the party other missions. The real Bahamut might even show up in his human form if such drama is appropriate for your campaign.

If you desire, Flame might have made *Justice's Edge* into his present-day phylactery. The adventurers can deduce this fact with appropriate knowledge checks, acknowledging the fact that if this is true, Flame's *soul gems* crumbled with him when he was destroyed. If the characters fail to figure out this twist, Flame could erupt from the sword again in a matter of days.

If the characters crush the *soul gems*, any remaining soul trapped inside is free to return to its body with the use of appropriate rituals or powers. If the souls were not destroyed, the three servants of Bahamut choose instead to continue on their way to Celestia, taking their places among the Platinum Dragon's exalted.

**Treasure:** Place appropriate magic items, art objects, and gems among the artifacts of Bahamut on the dais.

*Justice's Edge* is a +5 *holy avenger*. In the hands of a worshiper of Bahamut, it can be given extra powers that can be the focus of an ongoing campaign.

**Justice's Edge** **Epic Level**

*This longsword, decorated with red rubies and a platinum pommel, hums with the power of the Platinum Dragon.*

*Justice's Edge* is a +5 *holy avenger*.
**Enhancement Bonus:** Attack rolls and damage rolls
**Critical:** +5d6 radiant damage
**Special:** *Justice's Edge* can be used as a holy symbol of Bahamut. It adds its enhancement bonus to attack rolls and damage rolls and the extra damage its property grants (if applicable) when used in this manner. You gain no weapon proficiency bonus to attack rolls when using *Justice's Edge* as an implement.

**Property**
Your radiant powers deal 1d10 extra radiant damage when used through this weapon.

**Utility Power ✦ Daily** (Minor Action)
*Effect:* You and each ally within 10 squares of you gain a +5 power bonus to Fortitude, Reflex, and Will until the end of your next turn.

Bahamut blessed *Justice's Edge* to serve as a tool for justice in the hands of his divine servants. The weapon allows a character who does not revere Bahamut to wield it for a short time if that wielder acts in a manner that furthers the sword's agenda (see below). In the hands of such a wielder, the weapon acts only as a normal +5 *holy avenger*.

## Goals of Justice's Edge

- ✦ Promote honor, justice, and freedom.
- ✦ Oppose the machinations of Tiamat, her followers, and those who oppress others to further their greed.
- ✦ Root out evildoers, destroy them, and expose their plans.

## Roleplaying Justice's Edge

*Justice's Edge* is direct with its thoughts and opinions. It communicates telepathically with its wielder, but usually does so only when it is displeased. If the wielder fails to seek justice against those who have done evil, the sword speaks up in commanding and uncompromising tones.

### Concordance

| | |
|---|---|
| **Starting score** | **5** |
| **Owner gains a level** | **+1d6** |
| **Owner actively worships Bahamut** | **+4** |
| **Owner furthers a just cause (1/level)** | **+1** |
| **Owner fails to seek justice (1/day)** | **-2** |
| **Owner performs an evil act** | **-4** |

### Pleased (16–20)

*Justice's Edge* feels the eternal flame of justice burning in its wielder. The blade transforms this connection between it and the wielder into holy power.

The sword's enhancement bonus becomes +6, and its wielder gains the use of *strip the wicked* as long as *Justice's Edge* remains pleased.

**Strip the Wicked ✦ Daily** (No Action)
*Trigger:* You use *Justice's Edge* to hit a target with a melee attack.
*Effect:* Until the end of your next turn, the target loses all immunities and resistances.

### Satisfied (12–15)

*Justice's Edge* feels a kinship with its wielder, offering a small benefit as an encouragement for further acts of valor and bravery.

The wielder gains the use of a new property as long as *Justice's Edge* remains satisfied or pleased.

**Property**
You gain a +2 power bonus to saving throws while you are adjacent to an evil creature.

### Normal (5–11)

*Justice's Edge* recognizes in its wielder the potential to become a bastion of virtue, bravery, and fairness. At this concordance, the blade has the properties, powers, and characteristics included in its description.

### Unsatisfied (1–4)

*Justice's Edge* is disappointed in the acts of its wielder, who has performed in a manner inconsistent with the blade's dedication to fighting injustice and battling evil at all costs. The sword's enhancement bonus becomes +4, and its properties and powers fail to function.

### Angry (0 or lower)

*Justice's Edge* is unforgiving in the face of mortal weakness. The moment a wielder does enough to anger the sword, by failing to strike out against evil or injustice, *Justice's Edge* disappears, seeking a more worthy champion. The sword of Bahamut offers no second chances or long goodbyes. It might call forth servants of Bahamut to punish a wicked former wielder.

### Moving On

*Justice's Edge* might abandon its wielder not out of anger but out of respect. If the sword recognizes that its wielder has become the epitome of the ethos of the Platinum Dragon, and that its own abilities are now needed to help guide a lesser hero, then the next time the wielder gains a level, the sword and scabbard vanish in a flash of platinum-white light, appearing somewhere else in the world where a champion requires a weapon in the fight against injustice and evil.

## Failure?

Failure to destroy all the phylacteries means that the present-day Flame cannot be permanently defeated. If he is destroyed while any phylactery remains intact, he returns eventually. At your discretion, Flame retains enough of the power of *Justice's Edge* to return to the time when his surviving phylactery is held, and might take control of the other version of himself to work wickedness in tandem.

If he still possesses *Justice's Edge,* Flame can continue to travel throughout time, changing history and disrupting the adventurers' lives. Staunch allies might suddenly disappear, with no one else in the world remembering that they ever existed. Flame might even resort to attacking the characters' ancestors to erase the adventurers from history. Such a diabolical scheme makes an excellent subject for an epic tier adventure.

If the adventurers are killed in a different time, the campaign does not have to end. Instead of perishing, the adventurers might end up stuck in a past fifty to a hundred years before their own time, restored to life by the power of the time bubble that brought them there. Regaining consciousness in a place of safety, the characters have a chance to recover, to learn about their current situation, and to regain their bearings.

Continuing the campaign in the time in which the adventurers are stranded, they must defeat Flame in his current form. Doing this means investigating his whereabouts, learning his plans, and tracking him down. In addition to giving you the chance to create your own plans for Flame, you can also look to his original adventures for guidance. When the adventurers succeed in restoring the past, the time bubble is empowered once more to return them to the present, where they have another opportunity to foil the plans of the dragon demilich.

If the characters fail to defeat Flame and instead allow his plots to succeed, the aftermath potentially has huge ramifications for your campaign—and might set the seeds for Tiamat's rise to power as the core of the rest of the epic tier.

*About the Author*

**Shawn Merwin** is a technical writer and freelance game designer whose previous work includes *Dungeon Delve*™, *Assault on Nightwyrm Fortress*™, and the forthcoming *Halls of Undermountain*™. He has been an administrator in many of Wizards of the Coast's organized play campaigns, and his thoughts on RPGs and game design are featured in his "Know Your Roll" column at *Critical-Hits.com*.

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# GAMER RAGE

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